THOMAS NELSON PAGE

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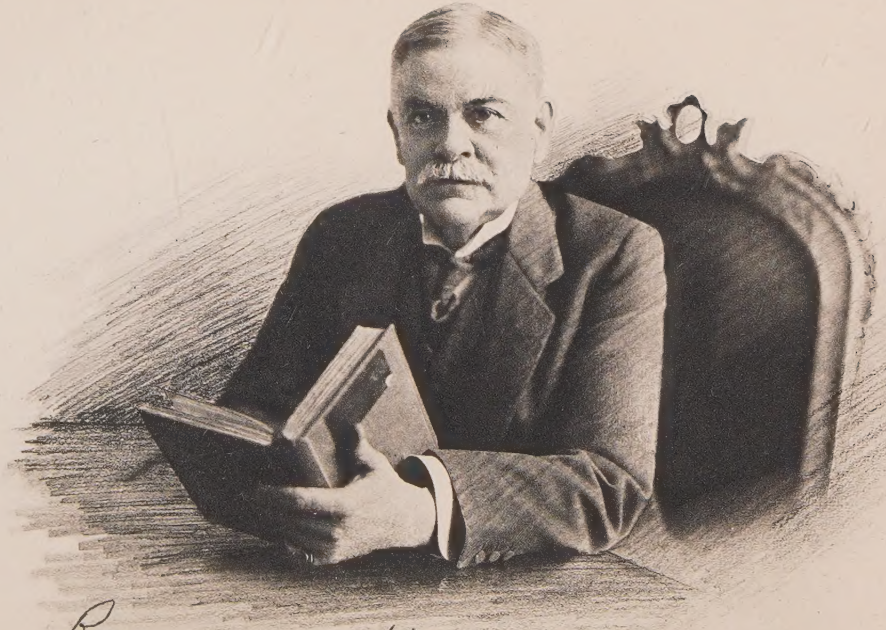

Rome
November
In the year of the Peace.

Your affectionate Brother
Thos Nelson Page

813
P133P

THOMAS NELSON PAGE

A Memoir of a Virginia Gentleman

By his brother

ROSEWELL PAGE

"Sapiens, sibi qui imperiosus,
Quem neque pauperies, neque mors, neque
vincula terrent,
Responsare cupidinibus, contemnere honores,
Fortis, et in se ipso totus teres atque rotundus."
—*Horace, Satires II, VII*

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THOMAS NELSON PAGE

I

HIS ANCESTRY

This memoir is of one who lived a noble life and possessed a charming personality. He filled with distinction a part on a wide stage, having known the extremes of adversity and prosperity, and met both with equanimity and serenity. He stood before Presidents and Kings without being confounded or elated, and helped those in need without patronizing them.

Gibbon, in his charming memoirs, declares that "the romance of 'Tom Jones,' that exquisite picture of human manners, will outlive the palace of the Escurial and the imperial eagle of the house of Austria." Those who have read the romance of "Marse Chan," that exquisite picture of human manners, may like to know something of the author, who so accurately described the life of the people among whom he lived at the most interesting

period of his country's history. One has said: "He wrote the epitaph of a civilization."

The subject of this memoir, who at the time of his death was, after ex-President Wilson, perhaps the most distinguished son of Virginia, had fewer ancestors than some people; for his father and mother had the same grandfather—Thomas Nelson, Jr., who signed the Declaration of Independence, and whose name is the only American one, besides that of Washington, on the pedestal of the Statue of Victory, which commemorates the surrender of the British under Lord Cornwallis at Yorktown.

His Page ancestor, John Page of "Rosewell," was the friend of Jefferson, and, as a college student, corresponded with the great Democrat in the most cordial way. He inherited a fortune, and at "Oakland," in old times, were Amsterdam and Elzevir editions of the classics that had belonged to him and been brought from "Rosewell." Jefferson's letters to him may be found in any authentic biography of that statesman. This Page ancestor was also an ardent patriot, being a member of the Committee of Safety, member of Congress, and governor of Virginia, succeeding in the latter position James Monroe.

Moncure D. Conway once told Thomas Nelson Page that this John Page was Jefferson's choice to succeed Monroe in the presidential chair, if the "Virginia succession" had continued. Page died before that succession ended. John Page's son, who was the author's grandfather, spent with his bride their honeymoon at "Monticello," as the guest of Mr. Jefferson, from whom they received every mark of affectionate hospitality.

"Rosewell," the home of the Pages, was separated from "York House" by a few miles of level land and the beautiful York River. Tradition tells of many historic events occurring at the two places. It is related that Jefferson, from the top of the former, discussed the draft of the Declaration of Independence, and that the leaden roof was taken off to make bullets for the patriot cause during the Revolution.

"York House" still carries the shell fired into it during the siege of Yorktown, when it was the headquarters of Lord Cornwallis. The tradition is that (though the Marquis de Lafayette had given orders to the contrary, out of respect and affection for its owner, then a major-general commanding the Vir-

ginia troops) that officer countermanded the order and offered the reward of a guinea to the gunner who should make the first hit; and that the successful gunner was a young French corporal, who became Marshal Bernadotte, who, it will be remembered, gained the affection of Napoleon and then sacrificed it and became the King of Sweden.

Through the intermarriage of five Nelson and Page children of the two places mentioned, the author's father and mother were first cousins. His father, Major John Page, was an officer in the Confederate army upon the staff of the chief of artillery of the Army of Northern Virginia. His mother, Elizabeth Burwell Nelson, was the daughter of Captain Thomas Nelson, of "Oakland," in Hanover County, Va., who had married his first cousin, Judith, youngest daughter of General Nelson, of Yorktown.

After the Revolution the fortunes of the Rosewell and York houses waned, and the younger generation moved up to the Nelson lands, which had been granted to their first Nelson ancestor in the early part of the eighteenth century. This was before Hanover was cut off from New Kent County. Here the forefathers of Thomas Nelson Page settled in

what in the old grants was called the Forks of the Pamonkey River. There the old colonial church, attended by the "Oakland" people, is still called and known as "the Fork Church."

It was through these upland plantations that Colonel Banastre Tarleton, the British partisan, rode on the 4th of June, 1781, in an effort to capture Governor Jefferson and the Virginia legislature, sitting in Charlottesville, after they had been driven from Richmond. The author's father used to tell of how in his childhood his black mammy would threaten him with "Tarleton" if he did not go to sleep. This was perhaps but the repetition of the story of the Claverhouse in English romance. It was one of these Nelson plantations, "Offley," which the Marquis de Chastellux visited when he returned to America after the Revolutionary War, and of which in his memoirs he has left so charming a picture.

At "Mont Air," another of them, General Nelson died January 4, 1789, and his body was taken to Yorktown for burial, where it lay in an unmarked grave until his great-grandson, Thomas Nelson Page, placed a stone over it with an inscription for which, during the World War, Secretary Lane telegraphed the

writer of this memoir: "He gave all for Liberty."

Through his Randolph ancestors Thomas Nelson Page shared the same blood with that which flowed in the veins of John Marshall, Thomas Jefferson, and Robert E. Lee; and on "the Carter Tree" Robert E. Lee and Thomas Nelson Page are found as descendants of Robert Carter, of "Corotoman."

Distinguished as was this ancestry, and assured as he was that it imposed upon the possessor the obligation "noblesse oblige," none ever heard of his claiming aught because of it; and the teaching of his father and mother was to the same effect.

Among the many sayings of Page's father, still remembered, and very close to the Bishop Warburton's statement, was: "My son, no one who has good blood brags of it, and no one abuses it but those who haven't got it!" Another epigram of that wise man, comparable with Doctor Holmes's observations on the self-made man, or with that of Benvenuto Cellini himself, was: "It's better to come from nothing and go to something than to come from something and go to nothing!"

In after-life the author was very fond of quoting the father of his friend, George W.

Miles, who, upon complaint made as to the impossibility of raising corn on the poor land of the parsonage, on which the Methodist minister and his sons worked so hard, had replied: "George, I'm not making corn, I'm making *men!*"

When his older brother, Reverend Frank Page, a young clergyman of the Episcopal Church, boarded with a New England family in northern Virginia, in his first parish, his landlady, in discussing with her friends the trouble of "too particular" boarders, asserted that she was thankful she had in her house "a plain homespun man who had never been used to much and was easy to satisfy!"

II

HIS HOME AND BIRTH

Thomas Nelson Page was born on the 23d of April, 1853, at "Oakland," already mentioned as one of the Nelson plantations in the upper end of Hanover, which county was distinguished in history, before his birth added a new lustre to it, as the birthplace of Patrick Henry and Henry Clay. The place took its name from the great oak-trees which surrounded the house, and "under which," as the author wrote in after-years, "Totapottomoi children may have played; which spread their long arms about it, sheltering nearly a half-acre apiece."

It is described in the opening chapter of "Two Little Confederates" as:

> Not a handsome place, as modern ideas go; but down in old Virginia, where the standard was different from the later one, it passed in old times as one of the best plantations in all that region. . . . The Mansion was known as the great-house on the plantation, to distinguish it from all the other houses on the place, of which

there were many. It had as many wings as the angels in the vision of Ezekiel.

The additions had been made, some in one generation and some in another, as the size of the family required; and finally when there was no side of the original structure to which another wing could be joined, a separate building had been erected on the edge of the yard, which was called "the Office." . . . The privilege of sleeping in "the Office" was highly esteemed, for, like the *toga virilis*, it marked the entrance upon manhood of the youths who were fortunate enough to enjoy it. There smoking was admissible, there the guns were kept, and there the dogs were allowed to sleep at the feet of their young masters.

The old kitchen was so far away from the house that Nat, the dining-room servant, and Harry, who helped to wait on the table, had to run with the batter cakes and wrap up the muffins in a napkin to keep them from getting cold. "Uncle Balla's" room was over the old kitchen, and there the boys played when the old colored man would permit them to come in, as he always did.

The room in the "Oakland" house in which the author was born was in the third story, counting from the basement, in which was the dining-room, that opened out through an entry into the yard. It was a small room whose sides were curtailed by the slope of the rafters, except where, as he described them, "there

were the quaint dormer-windows with small panes, poking out from its sloping up-stairs rooms." A small open fireplace was at one end and a door at the other. A grown person could stand straight only in the middle of the room. A trundle-bed, or pallet, which was a mattress laid on the floor, constituted the sleeping place of the boys, after they were old enough to leave the cradle.

The yard and garden in Page's youth contained about four acres surrounded by pyracanthus bushes, whose thorns were a terror to barefoot boys, and whose radiant glow of coral berries was a delight to all admirers of bright colors. In this hedge mocking-birds, cardinals, and thrushes delighted to show themselves. In Portland, Ore., recently, at the Wells Gilberts', I saw a garden with pyracanthus bushes in all their richness, and recalled the flower garden at "Oakland" when the writer was a boy.

The garden lay in front of the house, and occupied the southern slope toward the far edge of the yard, "spreading itself," as Matthew Arnold says of Oxford's gardens, "to the moonlight," if not "for a thousand years," at least for years enough to impress the life of the Southern author. In shape it was ellipti-

"OAKLAND," HANOVER COUNTY, VA., BIRTHPLACE OF THOMAS NELSON PAGE.

He was born in the room from which opens the dormer window at the left of the three in the row The additions, at each end of the house with the three dormer windows in the roof, were added—that on the right in 1858, that on the left in 1893, the latter by Page himself.

cal, with the broad side facing the front of the house some hundred feet away across a soft green sod. The entrance was through a wicket gate, that always brought to the boy's mind "the wicket gate" in "Pilgrim's Progress." Japonicas, with their rich calico colors, grew on either side of the gate and almost met overhead. Walks gave access to the different parts of the garden. Borders and sections abounded where the mistress and children might plant or dig when they chose to impinge upon the domain of Nat, the gardener.

Rose-bushes appeared everywhere, so the boys thought. This one came from "Shirley," that one from "York," another from "Hickory Hill," and still another from "Long Branch." Some of these roses still bloom, and those which bloom most luxuriantly are known as "Offley" roses, from the home of that name in the neighborhood, already referred to as described by the French marquis. Lilacs, syringas, forsythias, bridal-wreath, and spirea ushered in the spring with beauty and charm; sweet shrubs and chrysanthemums decked the autumn borders. Even winter was represented in the holly and pyracanthus berries mentioned.

The occupants of "Oakland," at the time

the author was born, were his Nelson grandparents, his father and mother, an elder brother, already mentioned, then four years old, his two maiden aunts, and his "Uncle William." The father and uncle were to become within a few years distinguished officers in the Confederate army, and one of his aunts to be the prototype of "Miss Thomasia," one of his most charming characters; and another was to be his teacher, as she was the teacher of the other children in the neighborhood who were near enough to attend the "Oakland" school.

The night that Thomas Nelson Page was born, his grandmother told the doctor when he arrived that she had told "Balla" to ride a white horse so that he might have a better guide in the dark. The records of St. Martin's Parish show that as an infant he was baptized September 18, 1853, by the Reverend Wm. N. Pendleton, to whom he was so much indebted in after-life.

As a child Page was very fair, with gray-blue eyes and very light-brown hair. He was said to have been a very beautiful baby, by his old mammy. He used to say that the blunt nose which he had was due to its having been pressed out of shape against the

window of the dining-room, when, as one of the children, he had to wait, and was looking to see "if the white folks were done eating." Up to the time that he left college he hardly ever weighed more than a hundred and thirty pounds. In his latter years he grew stout, and weighed a hundred and seventy. In height he was five feet eight inches.

That there was nothing unduly remarkable about the infancy of the future writer may be inferred from a statement of his mother after a lady left "Oakland" who had regaled the family with the clever sayings of her children: "My children must be very ordinary, for they never say anything clever enough for me to repeat in public." His father carried a lock of his son's hair in his pocket throughout the war, and brought it back, as perhaps his most valuable treasure, from "Appomattox."

"Are you not very proud of your son?" asked a lady of his mother once. "I'm very thankful for him," she answered modestly.

III

HIS YOUTH

The youth of the author of "Marse Chan" was passed when the institution of slavery was in its ripened form in Virginia, where it had existed since its beginning in 1620, when a Dutch ship had brought in to the colony a cargo of "neegars."

At "Oakland" there were some sixty "servants," little and big, old and young, whose relationship to the plantation was as well-defined as that of the owner. "Unc Billy" Brown was head man; "Unc Balla" Brooks was carriage driver, having succeeded George Colley; "Daddy Ralph" and Carpenter William were the carpenters; "Little William" and Davy Slow were teamsters; Cyrus and Griffin were ox drivers; Nat Carter was dining-room servant and head gardener, who had numerous assistants. "Aunt Betty" Wallace and Sallie Marshall were the cooks; Lucy Anne and Tamer and Sibby were the housemaids, and Delia and Fanny were the dairymaids, while "Mammy Liddy" and Nancy and Han-

nah, with Jane as helper, were the nurses and guardians of the children.

Mammy Liddy had been the nurse of Page's mother, and stood in the relation of guide, philosopher, and friend to the whole family. Charlotte, who has just died in her hundredth year on the land of her "Marse Tommy," as she called him, and was one of his most appreciative friends, was the cook at "Mont Air," but came to work at "Oakland" just after the war. The wash-house and smoke-house stood in the rear of the "other house," and were places of great importance in the family ménage.

The spring, on the far edge of the yard, as it bubbled out of the sandstone rock and was impounded at a spot in the middle of a grove of fine trees, was and is the pride of the place. From it fresh water, now pumped into the house by an hydraulic ram, was drawn many times a day, and it is related that the site of the house was selected from the finding of the spring before the forest was cleared for the "Oakland" settlement, and that its finding had won for the discoverer the prize of a gold piece which had been offered.

The spring path was the most beaten way on the plantation, and once, after the ex-

ambassador returned from Italy and he was writing of something that he could not find, he declared that he feared the time would come when he'd "have to be shown the spring path." This statement was quite in contrast with his wonderful memory, of which he once said jocularly that before he could talk he used to think what he would say when he had learned how to express himself.

The greatest influence in a man's life is supposed to be his mother. It was true in the case of Thomas Nelson Page. No son ever had a nobler mother, nor was there ever a son who had a higher opinion of his mother. To her he owed so much, both in youth and manhood.

In the impressionable age between eight and twelve his father and uncle had been absent in the Confederate army, and his mother had been everything to him and his brothers, one of whom was older and one younger than himself. On them she leaned at the close of the war, when most of the servants went away. Before they went off to college the boys helped about feeding the team and milking the cows. The author said that when he fed a flock of sheep one winter at "Oakland" he knew each one individually. This was in answer to

some one's questioning the statement that the Good Shepherd "calleth his own sheep by name."

To the day of her death, when more than ninety years old, from the time he could first remember her, he ever held his mother in reverence and affection. On the leaf of a volume of the beautiful "Plantation Edition" of his works appears the sentence: "For Mama from Tom with all his love and gratitude, Christmas, 1906." To her he addressed one of his noblest poems, beginning:

"Ever in her face
Shines Heaven's divinest grace.
Her soul is fresh and mild
As is a little child.
And as the fleshly tenement
With age grows worn and bent,
Her spirit's unabated youth
Is aye to me
The mind-compelling truth
Of Immortality."

Of her he was thinking when in "Social Life in Old Virginia" he wrote of the mistress of a plantation:

Her life was one long act of devotion to God, to her husband, her children, her servants, her friends, to the poor and all humanity. . . . She managed her family, regulated her servants, fed the poor, nursed the sick, and

consoled the bereaved. . . . With her own hands administering medicines or food, ever by her cheeriness inspiring new hope, by her strength giving courage, by her presence awaking faith; soothing the troubled spirit, and lighting the path down into the valley of the dark shadow. The training of her children was her work. She watched over them, inspired them, led them, governed them; her will impelled them; her word to them, as to her servants, was law. She reaped the reward. If she admired them she was too wise to let them know it; but her sympathy and tenderness were theirs always, and they worshipped her.

Of his father he thought when he wrote:

To be a Virginian gentleman was his first duty; it embraced being a Christian and all the virtues. He lived as one; he left it as a heritage to his children. . . . He was a wonderful talker. He read much of philosophy, politics, and religion, and only the best. Horace, Virgil, Ovid, Shakespeare, Milton, Dryden, Goldsmith, "Mr. Pope" were his poets; Bacon, Burke, and Doctor Johnson were his philosophers.

The influence of the family servants upon the children has often been mentioned. It was very lasting in the life of this Virginian boy. In after-life he often referred to it. They who read his stories are often reading incidents and experiences from his own life. His genius has made of every-day scenes of the country neighborhood in which he was born the setting for many of his stories.

"No Haid Pawn," just above "the big gate," is the ice pond where children skate, and ice is often gathered for the "Oakland" ice-house. That it had no inlet, but was a pond on high ground fed by springs, made it in the imagination of the negroes the place where men rode with no heads. "Thus it was," the author wrote, "that of all ghostly places 'No Haid Pawn' had the distinction of being invested to us with unparalleled horror."

"Unc' Edinburg" was the name of an old servant at "Pampatike," the Carter home, and the scene of "Ole 'Stracted" is an old cabin in which "Aunt Tamer" lived at "Mont Air." A point on the Fork Church road which the "Oakland" people travel on their way to church has been pointed out by the author as the place where occurred the scene in which the old negro was calling across the fence to his wife, who was standing in the door of a small whitewashed cabin: "Judy, have Marse Chan's dawg got home?" "Newfound" River still flows as he described it in his story of that name; though, as when he wrote of it, its channel is hardly deep enough to have floated the Navy of Lilliput when Lemuel Gulliver visited that country.

The "Oakland" people were devout church-

men. There were morning and evening family prayers, and during the war there was a midday prayer for the Confederate soldiers which those who heard have never forgotten. It was asserted on the floor of the General Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church, within the last few years, that General Nelson and his wife had had twenty-four descendants as ministers in that church.

In one of the conventions which met after Page's return he represented the European churches. His activity and conservatism in opposing certain changes in the Prayer Book are well remembered by those who were present. In one of the conventions in which he had taken part with Doctor Huntington, of New York, in some discussion, a member described the two debaters as "the master of diction" and "the master of fiction," and humorously called himself "the master of friction."

Once, as his grandfather read at prayers how Israel smote the enemies of the Lord, Tommy, as he was called, interrupted with the question: "Gran'pa, what is 'smote'?"

He had learned to read from the Psalter in the Episcopal Prayer Book, having been taught first the words, then the sentences, and

then to read the whole psalm. To this habit of reading aloud when a little boy may be attributed his success as a reader and lecturer. "Did you ever study elocution?" he was once asked. "Yes, when I read the psalms to my mother and my grandmother," he answered.

A Westerner, after the appearance of his story "Elsket," wrote and chided him rudely for having misquoted the ninetieth psalm, asserting a general principle which he did not question, that one who quotes the Scriptures should quote accurately. His reply was that in spite of the bad temper which appeared in the letter, he would explain that in quoting the psalm, he had used the Prayer Book version, which was an older translation than the King James version.

At "Oakland" there is now a neatly kept account on blue paper, such as was used at the close of the Civil War, giving the number of eggs day by day from the hen-house of Thomas Nelson Page, kept in a neat, boyish hand. And one of the regular occupations of the boys was in the spring to watch the turkey hens, so as to know where their nests were, as they went off in the fields to lay.

The description of the hen-house in "Two Little Confederates" is the picture of the

author's hen-house that used to stand near the "Oakland" barn. To guard this hen-house, the brindle dog "Hector" was employed. He did not enjoy the occupation or, rather, the requirement of being stopped in the board enclosure made of "slabs," which surrounded the hen-house of the future author. And when turned out, as he was night and morning, he would fain wander to the kitchen or other fascinating place, and, heedless of his young master's call, linger, much to that master's disgust. When at last he would appear, there would be many threats of what would be done to him next time for not coming when called.

They who read "John Marvel, Assistant," one of Page's last novels, will find in "Dix" many of the attributes of "Hector," when the author of that book was a boy, and regarded the ownership of a bull-dog as the proper state of man—at least, of a man with a hen-house.

I remember a tremendous fight between the owner of Hector and Joe, who was his constant companion, and as black as "Old Black Joe" in the song. I stood by, as a very little boy, and saw the fight—fist-and-skull, catch-as-catch-can, just outside of the old kitchen. The white boy had the better of it; but he was opposed by no mean antagonist, for Joe fought

like a wildcat. When Joe's mother came out and parted the fighters, and said she was going to whip Joe, his opponent said: "No, let him alone. He's had whipping enough!"

As the boys started off, as if nothing had happened, after she had washed their faces and brushed their clothes, she asked: "What yo' all fightin' about, anyhow?" "He said Hyena could whip Hector," answered Tom, "and I know he can't!" "Yes, he kin!" piped up the hard-fought but unconquered Joe. (Hyena was "Uncle Billy's" dog.) "Well, *nex'* time, yo' all let the *dogs* fight, 'stid *you*," she said, in a persuasive tone.

The discipline at "Oakland" was rigid, as the author has written. There were Sunday books and week-day books, family prayers, and grace before meals; and often, when a minister was present, "thanks were returned" after the meal. One of the visiting ministers who was asked to perform the duty for the first time found himself in such a quandary that as he came out of the dining-room his son whispered to him: "They like to have got you that time!"

The "Oakland" boys had been forbidden to climb upon the straw stacks at the barn, and quite "a trouncing" followed the dis-

obedience of the command. During the war, Tom and his companions climbed up and opened a window and got into the upper barn, which was only to be entered by the door, and only to be opened with a key kept by the head man, "Uncle Billy," in the daytime, and restored to the mistress of the plantation at night. The plantation was in high state of excitement! "What dem boys gwine do nex'?" "Dey done clime up an' broke into de upper barn!"

The punishment was worthy of the offense. They were sent to bed for that day, and that beautiful passage from the Scriptures read to them, proving "that they who entered not in by the door, but climbed up some other way, were thieves and robbers." The offense in this case was the more heinous, because though they got in through the window, they could not get out that way, but had to break the fastening to the door to make their exit.

When the future ambassador to Italy, with his little brother, one evening was returning through the adjoining farm, from "the Old Glebe," whither he had been to have an overcoat made by Miss Frances Lowry out of an old cloth skirt of his mother's, the field hands were gathering turnips. One of the men gave

him the biggest one in the pile. He bore it home and showed it to his mother in triumph. She calmly said: "My son, the servants have no right to give away their master's turnips. You must take it back to Mr. Talley and tell him about it." I remember the walk back, and how we satisfied ourselves that there was something wrong with the law of agency. The matter was, however, settled satisfactorily, for Mr. Talley said: "Boy, you can have just as many turnips as you can carry." Then his wife filled our pockets with red apples.

It was under such ideas of propriety that Thomas Nelson Page was reared, or "raised," as they say in Virginia. When once, in after-years, he said to his mother that he thought the discipline had been rather too rigid, which required the boys to put up their playthings on Sunday and to abstain from certain innocent pastimes, she settled the question by replying, as did the mother of the famous Doctor Robert Hall to a similar complaint: "When you have raised as fine sons as I have, you may complain."

Major Page once said to his son, in discussing the greatness of General Washington: "Tom, you cannot be as great a man as

Washington, but you can be as good as he, and imitate him by never telling a lie."

The day that Thomas Nelson Page was buried, one of his old neighbors said he knew of no man to compare him with but General Washington. I told him my brother had once said that a member of the Japanese Legation in Washington had told him that when a little boy in the hill-country of Japan, his mother told him the story of Washington and the hatchet and cherry-tree, and impressed upon him the importance and greatness of telling the truth.

Four miles from "Oakland," across "Little River," and one mile east of "Trinity Church" was "Woodland," the home of the Winstons—a notable family in the county and State—a woman of that family having been the mother of Patrick Henry, who was born at "Studley." There had come to "Woodland" to go to school in the neighborhood one of the Winston grandsons, whose parents lived in New York, where his father was a distinguished teacher of medicine.

Between this boy, though a few years younger, and the "Oakland" boy there sprang up a friendship which lasted till the end of Page's life. The manuscript from which

"Marse Chan" was published was in his handwriting, which was a remarkably good one. Together the boys hunted and fished and went swimming and paddling in a flat-bottomed boat on the mill-pond, and when one day the "Woodland" boy excused himself for being late by telling of his having killed a wild turkey and gobbler on his way to school, young Page's admiration knew no bounds.

To the end of his life he always said that his ambition was to kill a wild turkey, and to go with one of his tenants on such an expedition he considered great sport. Word would come that the turkeys had been scattered, and the "blind" would be ready at daylight the following morning. Often when away from "Oakland" a wild turkey would be sent him, and the sender would receive a token of appreciation that was as much esteemed as the bird forwarded was by him to whom it was sent.

Nor did his interest stop there, for he always wanted to know all of the details. How many were in the flock? Where were they flushed? Where was the blind? And how many were killed? After one of the many end-of-the-week visits at "Woodland," young Page returned with a beautiful pointer puppy, the

gift of one of the Winston uncles, and Page's "Bruno" became one of the famous hunting-dogs of the neighborhood. It would have scandalized some of his devoted kinsmen at the time had they known that Bruno had his name from "Uncle Tom's Cabin," which was at that time tabooed in that community.

It is hard to credit the statement, but it was confidently asserted by his owner, and believed to this day by the boys who for several years shot over the dog, that he would go out with them and find and point a covey of birds, and give the huntsmen two or three shots. But when they killed nothing, in spite of all protests and entreaties, he would return to the house, as if to show the uselessness of further effort on his part. Consequently, our first shots were good ones, for failure lost us not only the game but the dog as well.

To the day of the author's death his love of a good hunting-dog was a marked characteristic. And it was always reciprocated. A young setter at "Oakland," during a recent visit of the former ambassador, was his constant companion. After his leaving the place, the dog showed such marked evidence of being forsaken as to cause notice of the fact to be taken by those left behind.

Another sport and pastime at "Oakland" was the "breaking" of colts and oxen. To ride a colt for the first time was the pride of each boy on the plantation. Tom Page was known as a fearless rider, and though sometimes thrown, would mount again as Uncle Balla, the last authority on riding, would say: "Gie him he' head!" "Tu'n yo' toes in!" "An' press him wid you' knees!" Then he would say, if the colt grew stubborn: "Don' hit him!" "Coax him!" "Pat him!" Years afterward, when visiting his son-in-law, the Master of Hounds in Leicester, England, he was offered a hunter to ride after the famous "Quorn pack," but declined, saying he had stopped riding "jumpers" since he used to break colts at "Oakland."

When there were young oxen to be broken to the cart, a pair would be headed into the corner of a fence or into a big stall to be yoked. The method was to put the yoke gently over their necks. The bows would be inserted from below, to be held in place around their necks by new hickory "wyths," and their tails tied together to keep from breaking their necks—all of which was done amid much snorting and flinching on the part of the young and skittish animals, and soothing and per-

suasion from Cyrus, the ox driver, and the boys about him. "Haw, boy!" "Haw, steer!" "Haw, darlin'!" they would say, in the most soothing tones.

Then the oxen would be allowed to try themselves as yoke fellows in the barnyard, or perhaps be driven along the plantation road before being hitched to the two-wheel cart, with its ponderous tongue, too heavy for anybody but a strong man to lift. To get the end of the tongue into the big ring in the middle and on the under side of the yoke, with the big iron pin dropped down through the end of the tongue, to hold it in the ring, was the final act.

Then the fun began, so the boys thought, and there were many warnings of "Look out!" "Git away!" "They's coming!" The new situation, so startling and alarming, generally set the young oxen off at breakneck speed. Then the man or boy who could get up on the cart was supposed to be the most daring as he was undoubtedly the most reckless.

IV

HIS WAR EXPERIENCE

Young Page's first experience of war was in the spring of 1861, when he saw his father and Ralph, the son of his brother's black mammy, ride off to join the Confederate army, and a few days later saw his uncle William ride off with Nat upon the same errand. He saw Nat brought home demented after the considerate order of the master allowing him to ride on the caisson across the Potomac was countermanded by another officer, and the wading the stream brought on an illness which left the faithful man bereft of his reason. "Carpenter William" took his place as body-servant, and was captured along with his master's wagon and camp outfit on the retirement from Gettysburg.

Deep and lasting was the impression made upon the boy, and from that time he became and thought himself endowed with the powers and duties of manhood. He saw armies pass up and down the highway during the next four

years, for "'Oakland' was in the track of the armies." He, with his mother, attended the funeral and heard the details of the mortal wounding at First Manassas of his neighbor Eddie Fontaine, who was brought home and buried. And in the same garden and graveyard he saw another member of that family buried—Major John Fontaine—affectionately called by General Jeb Stuart, on whose staff he rode, "Johnny." It was in that garden, so he told me, that "Marse Chan" was buried.

At the cross-roads, just below the "Big gate" at "Oakland," he saw Jackson's army cooking and eating breakfast on its way from the Valley of Virginia to join Lee in the Seven Days' Battles around Richmond in the spring of 1862, and he was of the party that went down in the carriage from "Oakland" with "Uncle Balla" driving a load of provisions for Jackson's staff, of which his first cousin, Colonel Alexander (Sandy) Pendleton, was a member.

He saw the skirmish in the same neighborhood during a Federal raid, and after the war showed the spot to those who came in search of a Northern soldier who had been shot and buried near the "Edgewood" entrance. All

of this has been described in "Two Little Confederates," a part of which has been perpetuated on the covers by the artist who has made the illustrations for the book.

I remember distinctly, though too little to go with them, the return of the boys the day of the skirmish, laden with cartridges and the other things boys could fetch from the jetsam of a moving body of soldiers. I recall the description of their experience that day, and how a "Yankee" officer had told them to get away from there, that it was no place for children; and how one of the boys was derided because in his anguish at being left behind he had cried and called out to his older brother: "Bro, don't leave me!"

The day after the battle of Fredericksburg young Page went with his uncle Robert Nelson, a clergyman, who had been for years before the war and was for many years after it a missionary in China, to find out about his dear ones who had been in that dreadful battle. The boy slept that night in the tent of his father, which was also that of his uncle, the chief of artillery, and heard of the mortal wound of his neighbor, Colonel Lewis Minor Coleman. There he saw the horrors of war in all their fullness—the dead being buried, the

wounded being cared for, and the victorious army in possession of the field.

The next year, in the spring, from his home, he heard the guns at Chancellorsville and was told the story of the death of Stonewall Jackson, and how General Lee had sent him word that though he had lost his left arm, he, Lee, had lost his right. It is from this that Jackson is often spoken of as Lee's right arm.

In 1864 young Page heard of General Grant's having crossed the two end divisions of his army over the North Anna River, the right one within eight miles of "Oakland," and how General Lee had thrown him out of that end of the county to have him come back into it near the other end at Hanovertown, and fight the bloody battle of the first week in June, known as Second Cold Harbor.

Shortly before that he had seen Sheridan's cavalry burn the railroad-station and supplies at Beaver Dam, five miles from "Oakland," and recalled how Uncle Balla had driven him and his mother and little brother home, and how they saw the fires on the sky-line when they arrived at home. It was in answer to a statement from the boy's mother of their peril that the old driver had said with confidence: "I brought you here safe, and I'll carry you

back safe!" And he did. In after-years, when Page rode with members of the War Staff College over the line of march traversed in the Grant Campaign of 1864, and a couple of the officers in uniform rode by "Oakland" and took luncheon there, old Charlotte warned his sister, who went to welcome them, to mind how "she went to meet them Yankee officers, for they might shoot her." The young officers, Captain McCoy and Captain Cheney, who have since become distinguished general officers for gallant service abroad, enjoyed the story, and soon satisfied the old woman of their pacific intentions.

There had been a bridge over Little River, about three miles from "Oakland," just below Fulcher's Mill. When it was washed away it was necessary to use the ford, which was a bad one. As a matter of precaution the "Oakland" boys, who had to cross the ford on horseback as they went to and from the railway-station, were told by their mother to ask their good friend Mr. Sharp, the miller, to see them safely across.

As old Charley, the only horse left by the army that the boys could ride, plunged into the stream with the future author of "Unc' Edinburg's Drowndin'" perched up in the

saddle to keep his short pantaloons from getting wet, the old miller was heard to exclaim, when the horse and boy clambered up on the other side: "They'll drown one o' these 'Oakland' babies yet if they don't stop sending them to the station while the water is so high!" But that night the trusty miller, with his lantern, stood on the side of the stream, and hailed the boy as he plunged into the swift current: "I'm here, man! Hold his head up the stream, and set tight!"

To this mill, after the war, often came the boy, astride of a horse or mule, seated on a bag of corn, recalling to those acquainted with the history of the county another great citizen, no less than Henry Clay, who in a similar way had won the sobriquet of "The Mill Boy of the Slashes," the Slashes being a section of the county called by that name. The leading village in the county was formerly called "The Slash Cottage," and subsequently took the name of "Ashland" from the beautiful home of Mr. Clay in Kentucky. At the time of Page's death he owned the old mill and had rebuilt the dam, below which now stands a bridge just above the ford mentioned.

In "The Old South" Page has described the return from the surrender at Appomattox:

I seem to see the return now—my father on his gray horse, with his body-servant, Ralph, behind him. I remember the way in which, as he slipped from his horse, he put his hand over his face to hide his tears, and his groan, "I never expected to come home so." All were weeping. A few minutes later he came out on the porch and said: "Ralph, you are free. Take the saddles off and turn the horses out!"

The boy's own experiences, and the constant reiteration and commemoration of the marches and battles of Lee's army in which those nearest to him indulged as they sat by the bright fires at "Oakland" and talked the night away, like Goldsmith's broken soldier, deeply impressed the author of "Marse Chan" and of the "Life of Lee."

His father and uncle, with often a visitor—for the whole white population of the neighborhood had been in the army—would recount the movements of the armies, the strategy of the generals, the bravery of the individuals, the causes of victory or defeat, until it was time for the boys to go to their books or to bed.

Thus the author of the stories dealing with the war, and of the biography of Lee, was informed by those who, like Æneas, had seen a great part of that war, or of that part which related to the movements of the armies in the

great campaigns in Virginia. So well informed was he that Colonel Thomas H. Carter, a brilliant artillerist, told the writer of this memoir that he considered the account of the battle described in Page's "Soldier of the Empire" the best account of a battle he ever read. And a great soldier of the Federal army told the author that in his "Lee" he had almost proved his case and successfully refuted the charge often made that Lee was great only in *defense*, and not in *offensive* operations.

Twenty miles away from "Oakland" is "Hickory Hill," the home of Page's cousins, the Wickhams.

To the daughter of the house from Washington, after his removal to that city, he wrote of it and of its occupants when he was a boy:

1759 R. Street, Washington, Corner
New Hampshire Avenue
July 5, 1899.

My dear Annie:

Your kind letter gave me a great deal—a very great deal of pleasure, and I have thought of it, and of all the train of memories it brought with it, many times. Even now, as I write, I find myself sitting back, following the track that memory leads me on. It is dimmer nearer me than it is years back. When I was a youngster Hickory Hill, you, and all that was connected with you were a very striking part of my life. Events and

men and things have crowded in so much of later years that they have confused each other somewhat and are misty at times. I have become more indifferent or duller, but it is not so with the further-back past, and Hickory Hill, from the time when I first stood in the old hall and looked, half dazed by its grandeur, down toward the new part and to right and left when the closed blinds darkened the light, stands out as clearly silhouetted before me as though it were but yesterday. Your grandfather, your grandmother, your father and mother, yourself and Henry, Uncle Tom and Aunt Betsey Christian, whom you didn't call Aunt, all stand before me. Willy came later. Children are arrant little prigs and ignore those younger than themselves. I remember Uncle Tom used always to serve lemonade for dinner—to us children. That was a mark of luxury with which wine did not compare. I don't care for champagne, but lemonade served every day still possesses a sort of distinction in my mind, and when I see my girls with pitchers of it among their young friends, I somehow feel as if they were not aware of their luxuriousness. I suppose I have seen *finer* rooms than "the old parlor," but when I think of grandeur it is the old parlor that insensibly *rises* to mind. I hunted Europe for fine copies of the Eruption of Vesuvius and the Bay of Naples that used to illuminate the walls and still do in my old parlor. So Hickory Hill has remained with me a shining part of my memory. Your mother was the first person I ever remember to have heard had paid me a personal compliment. She never knew it, but it has paid her a rich interest in gratitude and affection. How little things count! Your grandfather was the only absolute authority on books and weather outside of our world I ever knew. I have known others who have seized the crown, but he was

Cæsar Augustus. Cousin Anne always seemed to me a sort of divine personage—a kind of Holy Mother who tempered the atmosphere and kept him from being too scorching or too bitter. I am speaking of him very far back—for of later years I only enjoyed him without the least awe of him. Your father was one of the three or four notable men I have known in life. He is a type for a romance and an heroic one. His voice that spoke his heart and his breeding; his force and, withal, his just attitude toward mankind have always remained in my memory. Some day I want to paint him as he was—I have taken a bit of him here and there; but at full length he would stand for a justification of our people.

I was very much obliged to you for sending me the pedigree of Boston. As it happens, I am at present engaged in writing a racing story, and it will come in just pat. Do you remember, long years ago, you gave me a bit of a poem called the Siege of Rethel? I have never seen any one but you and myself that knew it.

Now I must stop. I had no idea of imposing such a long letter on you; but I don't do it often, do I? I could never understand just why messages of love are always slipped in at the tag end of a letter, but such is the custom, and I bow to custom, however much I deride it. At least, my messages are sincere, and I hope you will give my love to all your household and accept for yourself a great deal, and also my gratitude from your lifelong friend and affectionate Cousin.

THOS. NELSON PAGE.

General Williams Carter Wickham was the only general officer from the county. He commanded a brigade of cavalry in the Confederate army. It was from the Wickham

home that General Lee's son, who had been severely wounded, was taken as a prisoner. And it was there that another Lee escaped capture at the same time, by hiding in a box-tree in the yard when his brother was taken prisoner. To "Hickory Hill" young Page often went, and to "Shirley," on James River, he had been taken by his mother to see their cousins, the Carters. In the latter house still hangs the Peale painting of General Washington, given by him to General Nelson, and by him given to his daughter Mary, who married Robert Carter of that place, brother of General Lee's mother.

Sometimes the "Oakland" boys would go with their mother or grandparents over to Powhatan, where their mother's sister, "Aunt Virginia," lived, the other side of James River. It was about thirty miles away, and "Uncle Balla" would drive the carriage into the ferry-boat, which old Charles, the ferryman, would push across the river with a pole long enough to reach from his shoulder to the bottom, as he walked the length of the boat, with his weight as motive power. The river at Jude's ferry, where the carriage crossed, is about three hundred yards wide, and greatly impressed young Page as he would sit in the carriage

and be ferried over to the other side. He often thought, as he looked at the old ferryman, of Charon rowing over the River Styx.

At "Oakland" there hangs on the wall the picture of a charming girl who, until her death, at the age of fourteen, was the darling of the house and the only sister Page ever knew. Her mother had died while her father was away in the army, and left the baby in the hands of a faithful neighbor, but in her last hours commending it to the tender care of her cousin, Page's mother. To fetch the baby to "Oakland," that lady, with her youngest son and nurse, travelled to Albemarle, and brought Belle Gardner to her future home. If not the "Cousin Belle" of the "Two Little Confederates," she at least was that personage idealized and grown to full womanhood, and gave her name and personality to the story.

V

HIS EDUCATION

From the day young Page's father, thenceforth known in the neighborhood as "Major Page," and his uncle, since known there as "Colonel Nelson," returned from the army, a great burden was lifted from the boy's shoulders. He had been the man of the family since his older brother went to Washington College, in Lexington, Va. It was that brother who was allowed to join the Home Guard that went out to defend the town against "the Raider," General Hunter, because he cried when they said he was too little to go. He used to tell of how his captain, James J. White, so long professor of Greek in the college and university, took him up behind on his horse, when he was found so tired and exhausted by the march. In after-years this story, related by a distinguished Texan, gained for the author's brother, then living in Waco, Texas, the chaplaincy of the Confederate Camp of Veterans of that city. The comment of the gallant soldier was that any boy

who cried to go in the army was entitled to be chaplain.

To Thomas Nelson Page's father the boy became companion and friend as well as a most dutiful son. Behind him he rode on horseback, and all questions were discussed. What was the finest line in Shakespeare, or Pope, or Virgil, or Horace? For together they read and quoted Virgil, and then the future author of "The Lectures on Dante" learned to know the great Latin long before he knew that the great Italian had made him his guide in the most famous of all the journeys ever undertaken by mortal.

Before he left his aunt's school the boy knew by heart much of the first two books of Virgil in the original, which he read and learned with his father. Many years afterward this knowledge stood him in good stead when he went before the Board of Visitors of the University, of which his friend Armistead C. Gordon was rector, and successfully opposed Latin being taken out of the course for the degree of Bachelor of Arts.

When he became too big to continue in his aunt's school, he was fortunate in being able to have as a teacher a kinsman who had taken the degree of Master of Arts before he left the

university for the Confederate army, and who now returned to "Edgewood," his home, four and a half miles from "Oakland," and opened a boys' school. There the boy did so well that his father, in after-years, when recommending the teacher for a college presidency, wrote that under him his son had learned as much as he believed any boy had ever learned in the same time.

Among his "Edgewood" schoolmates there are now a distinguished lawyer in Baltimore and an eminent district judge in San Antonio, Texas. With a near kinsman of his own age, who lived on the adjoining plantation, he walked the distance that now seems beyond belief to modern schoolboys. With these friends there has continued the most affectionate intercourse. Within a few years of his death the ex-ambassador, in returning from California, took the southern route, that he might stop to see the schoolmate above mentioned as living in San Antonio. Another of these schoolmates only preceded him a few weeks to the land of the spirit.

Sometimes the schoolboys could borrow a mule to ride. This was the case for one whole week "hand-running," with Kit, a Mont-Air mule, who had earned her free-

dom from the plough by kicking Cæsar, Charlotte's husband, in the head when he went to hitch the inside trace and too incautiously approached her heels. During the time that the man was hors-de-combat, Kit was pressed into the service of the schoolboys. It depended on her mood whether she would "carry double" or not. For the boys, if not the mule, realized Sancho Panza's declaration "that if two ride on a horse, one must ride behind." It was as good as a circus to see the boys start off with books and bags swinging, as the animal went sometimes on half as many feet as a quadruped should use in travelling. The way in which the mount would be made was to divert Kit's attention from the fact that she had to have two riders on her back, by one of them getting on as she was trotted by a fence or stump by the other. The nearest approach to Kit and her riders was the gray "mascot" mule of the army, whose performance at West Point I witnessed at intervals between the play at football of The Point and Colgate some years ago.

Cousin Fanny, the schoolmaster's sister, lived with her brother at "Edgewood." She has been signalized in Page's "My Cousin Fanny," thought by some to be his best story.

She had a rare voice in singing and excellent taste in literature, combined with great personal charm. She made much of her young cousins, but was especially attentive to the "Oakland" boy. She was to him Matthew Arnold's ideal of culture—"knowing the best that had been thought and said in the world."

She introduced him to Scott's novels and to the charm of Tennyson. A constant visitor at his home, at the old piano, sadly out of tune, she sang the gay English songs and the French ones, too, in which, as she repeated the lines and led the tune, the boys would join with spirit, if not always with a Parisian accent. I recall her leading the song:

"Voyez, sur cette roche
Ce brave a l'air fier et hardi
Son mousquet est près de lui,
C'est son fidèle ami!"

All would try to join in, as all would in the chorus:

"Tremblez, au son de la trompette!
De loin l'écho répète!
Diable, diable!"

I remember how she applauded Tom's efforts at singing the French words. Then she would sing Tennyson's song, "The splendor falls on

castle walls," to which she had written the music, which I know to this day; and when urged, as she often was, she would recite some lines she wrote to "The Psyche" of young Galt, the sculptor, beginning:

> "Well art thou called the soul;
> For as I gaze on thee,
> My spirit past control
> Leaps up in ecstasy."

These lines made such an impression upon young Page that years afterward he reproduced them from memory, and they appear in the story called after their writer, as above mentioned.

Sometimes an evening would be spent in hearing ghost-stories, when the lights would be lowered, and all sitting around the wood-fire would hear told the most blood-curdling tales of horror. Presently some one of the elders, for they would listen, too, would say, "It's time for these children to be in bed," and then Cousin Fanny would go to the piano and play one of the old hymn-tunes, for they used to sing at prayers; and there would be very delightful singing of some old hymn, often sung the more lustily because she would notice how each one sang. She would say,

"Tom, sing bass," and the boy would make the effort, however he might miss the key.

The "Edgewood" school, and its intervening distance of four and a half miles through forest and field, made the highway along which many of the author's characters travelled. To his observant mind there was little that escaped attention. The flowers along the roadside, the notes and plumage of the birds, the bark of the squirrel, the hare gaps for another trap, the best wood to make fishing-poles or whistles out of, were all noted and stood him in good stead in after-years.

He shall tell of the influence of "Edgewood," the "*Côté du Bois*" of "My Cousin Fanny," in his own words. Of it, while in Italy as ambassador, he wrote to one of his cousins who had lived there:

It takes me back to write to you. Never a day passes without my reverting to the old times and life and all that went to make up a society which I feel after much experience of the world to have been unexcelled for refinement and piety and goodness in all history. I often think of "Edgewood" and what it has been to me in my life. I have the most vivid and tender memories of it all. My Cousin Fanny is inshrined in my heart as the most original and charming character I ever knew.

Page's Cousin Fanny was not the only one who told the children stories at "Oakland." His aunt Anne Rose, who was his "Miss Thomasia" in "Red Rock," was the regular standby. She only yielded "when Fanny came to give her a rest," as she expressed it. This aunt of his had written two books, "The School in the Woods" and "Old Family Servants," both now unknown and out of print; the former giving an account of a school which she had established in the neighborhood, and paid an old man for teaching, and the latter being sketches of venerable old servants of the family. Both books were published by the American Tract Society, and Bishop Meade, who had taught Page's father and married his cousin, wrote the preface, which was supposed to give it the "imprimatur" indeed.

The stories told the children ranged through the fables of Æsop, the stories of the Bible, through Shakespeare by way of Charles and Mary Lamb, through Scott's novels, down to the latest magazine stories, if any magazine had been received. I remember her telling us "The Last Chronicle of Barset," one of Trollope's ponderous novels, and I have often thought that if it had been written as told to Tom Page and the rest of us, it would not have

passed into the limbo of oblivion. In her old age this aunt wrote the "Chronicles of an Old Woman," which a fire unluckily destroyed.

Eight miles from "Oakland," in the direction of Richmond, was, and is, Anthony's blacksmith shop. Thither young Page used to ride his father's horse to be shod, and it was about the farthest point known to the "Oakland" boys at that time. After his return from Italy, as he and his wife were driving by the old shop, he made the driver stop and, getting out, went in and stood silently, bareheaded, as he found the shop deserted by his old friend's son, who was at dinner at the time. Then, getting back into the car, he told with some emotion of his recalling the spirits of old friends who had been so good to him in his youth.

When Thomas Nelson Page entered Washington College there were two men there who made a deep impression upon him—the Reverend William Nelson Pendleton, rector of Grace Protestant Episcopal Church, formerly chief of artillery of the Army of Northern Virginia, who had married his aunt; and the great commander of the Southern armies, Robert E. Lee. In the home of the former he lived, and in the home of the latter he visited.

Of the influence of these two men he has left his own account in an address made at Washington and Lee University.

That he was known to the great soldier whose biographer he became, and for whom he had so great an admiration, is seen in the following incident told by himself. As he was hastening to an early lecture, somewhat belated, whom should he meet in a narrow road but the president of the college. There was no alternative. He must pass him. He thought of General Grant at Spotsylvania. Determined, however, to make the best of the situation, he saluted in the most respectful manner. As he hurried on, the quiet voice of the great soldier said: "Mr. Page, ask 'Miss Lella' to let you have your breakfast a little earlier, that you may not have to miss any part of your lecture." "Miss Lella" was Doctor Pendleton's daughter, Page's cousin, who kept house at the parsonage.

There is generally not much in the life of a college man to single him out conspicuously for future success. I have been the friend of men at college who years afterward became most distinguished in the life of the country, and I do not think there is any way to earmark future success or greatness as the world

deems them. In spite, however, of this lack of ability to pick those who shall arrive without failure at destination, or "emerge," as the scientists say, the suggestion by one of the most useful Americans of the day that college education is a failure is without foundation and unsound. The association with some great man has often wrought a wonderful result in a college student.

"It is hard for me to realize that Tom Page, the most distinguished alumnus of Washington and Lee University, was in my class there, for I have no recollection of him," recently remarked a distinguished American citizen of the far South to a friend. "Well, tell him," said the author of "Red Rock" modestly, "I remember him very well and always admired his talents."

Of his life in college there are few incidents. He had promised his mother that he would not play cards for money while there, so he told me. She wrote to him every week during his absence, and he replied with news of his life and work. Perhaps his work as one of the editors of the *Southern Collegian*, the college paper, was of much service to him.

When the college vacations came, he returned to "Oakland" and took up the regular

life of the place, enjoying to the fullest the association with those he loved, working on the farm, in field or garden, and in spare moments reading or visiting. He used to recall the time and place when, on a long June day, after the return of his father from the army, that gentleman, after an exhausting morning's work in the field, threw his hoe down, saying: "Well, if I can't make a living with my head, I must starve." It was not long before the man without the hoe had a good practice in the circuit in which he lived, for he was blessed with a good education and was a university graduate in law.

There were many charming girls in the neighborhood of the Page home, and the mules and horses which had worked all day were often commandeered for visiting at night. On one occasion, when the future author's brother and a cousin went to call upon some of these girls, a beautiful bouquet had been prepared by the mother at the instance of her elder son, for him to take to one of them. The flowers were delivered with all ceremony as the thought and gift of the gentleman who presented them, and were being duly admired, as only a pretty girl can, when out there fell from the centre of the bouquet a card, "With

the compliments of Thomas Nelson Page." The indignation of the brother was only equalled by the amusement of the girls, and as the young gentlemen rode off that night one of the girls, in a most bewitching voice, called out: "Be sure to thank Tom for the flowers."

It was of the girls of this house he always said he was reminded, in giving the incident upon which his story, "The Old Gentleman of the Black Stock," was founded. As one day he walked along a frequented street of Richmond, he noticed coming up the hill an old carriage driven by an aged negro, with a very indifferent pair of bony horses and a much-patched-up harness. In it there were several charming country girls, who were evidently enjoying everything they saw as they looked out of the windows of the old carriage. So much was he impressed by their charming appearance that he stopped and watched the carriage until it turned the corner and drove out of sight.

As he stood looking, an old man walked up. He wore a faded suit and a high hat and black stock. Pausing a minute, he addressed the young lawyer with the quiet voice of a gentleman: "My young sir, if you have not already done so, when you choose a wife, pick one from

an old carriage like that!" Then he moved on, and the young man saw him no more; but he had left the seed of a story in the young man's mind.

When the story of "The Old Gentleman of the Black Stock" appeared, the author sent a copy to two young girls, with the inscription: "To my two sweet cousins, who might have been in the Hill-and-Dale carriage."

After leaving Washington and Lee University, young Page spent a year at "Oakland," after the manner of the young men of the family. The plantation by that time, under the careful attention of his uncle, Colonel Nelson, began to respond to good management and good tillage, for, though there had been great neglect during the four years of war, and the old system of labor was gone forever, the energy and ability of its experienced head made it produce enough to support and maintain the family, aided, as it was, by the efforts of Page's father. From association with his bachelor uncle, whose life was one of service for others and whose genuine piety was after the stern Puritan order, and whose military career has been referred to, came the author's story, "The Burial of the Guns."

On the way to join Johnston's army in

North Carolina, the news of the surrender of Lee at Appomattox had reached the colonel of artillery just before his command got to the State border. Calling his men together, he announced the news of Lee's surrender, and then, ordering the guns spiked and rolled into the river, he distributed the horses and ordered his men to go home and await his further orders.

In after-years Thomas Nelson Page used to say that those nights at "Oakland" were the shortest ever known by him; that he had hardly touched the pillow, it seemed to him, before he would hear his uncle's voice telling him that it was day and time for him to go to the barn to see about feeding the horses and other stock on the place.

During that year there was much coming and going to and from "Oakland." It was open house for a large connection, and thither came from time to time those more or less related to the family, who ever received a cordial welcome and a share in the good but plain living. Young Page identified himself with the place and neighborhood. In his spare hours he read diligently, generally the old books, for there were not many new ones in the "Oakland" library.

That winter he read "Blackstone's Commentaries," which his father asserted to be the foundation of the study of jurisprudence. He also wrote or copied law papers for his father and became acquainted with the forms in which the legal pleadings were cast, and which were almost as they were in the days of Coke and Littleton. I remember that he wanted to return to the college for the Commencement, and the question of the expense of the trip was discussed, but was finally determined in his favor upon his prompting his father in the quotation of a line from Pope's "Essay on Man."

VI

AS TEACHER IN KENTUCKY

"STUDY a profession," said his uncle to the boy. "Your father has the advantage over me; for the war, which took away everything else from us, could not take his profession from him." And to the same effect was his father's advice. But where was the money to come from?

This question was settled by the offer made him by Mr. Theodore Brown and his second wife, who was Page's cousin, to come out to their home, near Louisville, Ky., to teach their children. The family was a large one, the older children being the first cousins of the lady who afterward became the young teacher's wife, being the children of her aunt, who before her marriage was Miss Bryan. The fact of any relationship was unknown to the boy teacher of nineteen, and was not known until twenty years later, when he met their cousin and married her in Chicago.

At least one of the scholars was as old as the teacher, and possibly bigger, for the Vir-

ginian was only five feet eight inches, and weighed but a hundred and thirty pounds. His life there was, however, quite satisfactory. He succeeded in winning the confidence of his school and of its patrons, and among the friendships of his life has been that of one of his oldest pupils—Frank Brown, Esq., of Chicago.

In Kentucky he made many friends, whom he continued to remember as long as he lived, and many times in after-years he referred to the friendships of that period. At his home in Washington he was ever glad to welcome Kentuckians, among whom I might name Major McDowell, John R. Proctor, Helm Bruce, John Fox, Robert Burns Wilson, and James Lane Allen.

Toward Kentucky, as the home of Henry Clay and the last home of the great thoroughbred "Planet," who had been bred by his neighbor Major Doswell in Virginia, the young teacher ever had a leaning. He doubtless wondered if another youngster born in that same Virginia county might not find a home and become famous, as had the great Whig leader of whom his father was so faithful a follower. Clay's beautiful home, "Ashland," a picture of which hangs on the "Oak-

land" wall, gave the name to the leading village in the Virginia county of his birth, already mentioned.

While teaching in Kentucky, young Page read faithfully at the law in his spare hours the course mapped out for him by his father—Blackstone, Kent, and the decisions of John Marshall—so that at the end of the session he had not only saved money enough to pay his way for a year at the University of Virginia but had laid up such a store of information as enabled him to withstand the protest of the great law professor, John B. Minor, at his supposing he could take the whole law course and be graduated therein in one year.

VII

HIS LIFE AT THE UNIVERSITY

PAGE's life at the university was one of hard work—so hard, indeed, that when the day came for the final examination for the degree of Bachelor of Law, he could not hold up his head, but lay in bed sick with fever, and disappointed. His father, who had come up to spend the night of his examination with him, found him in a sad plight, though tenderly nursed by his aunt Virginia, in whose house he lived, a mile away from the university. "Never mind!" he said comfortingly. "You'll be given an examination if I have to go before the board of visitors. And if you never get your degree, the judges will give you a license, and you shall begin the practice of the law in Richmond this fall! I'll go right up and see Minor about it!"

The examination was given him at the beginning of the next session, which he passed successfully. Mr. Minor never quite forgave him for abandoning the law, for which he

thought him so fit. He ever said: "The law is a jealous mistress."

Page's year at the university was a most interesting one. He had joined the Delta Psi Fraternity at Washington College, and took an active part in the debates and elections of the Jefferson Literary Society. He wrote for the "university magazine" in a way that excited attention at the time. There he became acquainted with and made the friendship of a number of clever men, whose friendship lasted through life. Of those who survive him are Alfred P. Thom, Frederick F. Reese, R. T. W. Duke, Jr., Robert R. Prentis, and Armistead C. Gordon. To them Tom Page was ever as he was when they knew him as a student in college. Though they have attained the height of their several professions, they followed his career with the same interest and pride that he took in their welfare and distinction. The "pleading" in the moot-court, in which Judge Duke was for plaintiff and he for the defendant, has on the back of the paper, in his writing: "I won in the Moot Court, Thos. Nelson Page."

Perhaps next to the influence of the university itself, and of Mr. Minor, the great teacher of the common and statute law, the most no-

table influence there on Thomas Nelson Page was the family of Mason Gordon, the uncle of his friend Armistead C. Gordon. To that hospitable home he would repair with the freedom of any inmate, and always with the assurance of a hearty reception. Mr. Gordon was a member of the Charlottesville bar, and brother-in-law of Judge Robertson, leader of the State bar. The Gordon home was a mile in the country. Its owner was the most amiable of men, and his wife and little girls and two nephews made an ideal family to their young guest.

The master of the house would recite Burns until one of the younger ones would take up the lines and carry them on till the whole of "Tam o' Shanter" was recited, and there would be such applause as rarely attends any actor or declaimer. Then another member of the group would recite "The Blessed Damozel" of Rossetti, or the best poem, as each might claim, from Swinburne or Keats or Tennyson, until it was past the hour for retiring, or until they had to be called a second time to the supper-table.

And such criticism: the best line in any of the poets, ancient or modern. The whole gamut of poetry was before that group, and

all literature was open for consideration. The younger men always yielded to the elder, or "Unc Mason," as Page also called him, partly from respect but mainly because he was more accurate than they were. Lindsay Gordon was a genuine poet, whose early death blighted a successful literary career. That Thomas Nelson Page and Armistead C. Gordon became the first literary men of their decade in Virginia, I have often thought in part attributable to that home.

Not far away from the university was "Edgehill," the famous girl school kept by the Misses Randolph, whose father, Colonel Thomas Jefferson Randolph, was the grandson of Thomas Jefferson. At that school were many of the charming girls of the South. Among them was one related to the "Edgehill" family, whom young Page greatly admired. She was the inspiration of many a youthful effusion, and his visits were as frequent as the spare time he had and the rules of the school allowed. There is no evidence that his affection was returned, and only recently I have been informed that his letters of that period to his friends give some insight into the situation as seen through the eyes of the ardent young law-student. Certain it is that the

association with the "Edgehill" family was one which brought him the acquaintance and friendship of some of the cleverest people of the country.

VIII

HIS PROFESSIONAL CAREER AND LIFE IN RICHMOND

When Thomas Nelson Page came to the bar of Richmond in the fall of 1874, that bar was a very able one. Many of the older lawyers and judges had been officers in the Confederate army, and there were often as many titled officers in the trial of a cause as would be found at army headquarters.

With the bar young Page was soon on very friendly terms, and by his diligence and good manners and ability began to get a good practice. After a conference of lawyers in an important case, in which the young man gave his opinion and his reasons therefor with a confidence which carried his views against those of some of his elders, Colonel John B. Young, a leader of the bar, told Page's father that he was the wisest man of his years he knew.

At the bar he was a good speaker, relying upon the clearness of statement of his case, which he felt it his conscientious duty to prepare to the best of his ability. His care of de-

tails and his knowledge of practical affairs, much of which was the result of his experience as a country-bred man, was a noticeable thing in his work, whether advising in his office, taking depositions in a country store, or arguing a case in court.

He had the importance of arguing the evidence closely impressed upon him by an early experience. In a case before the jury, Colonel Thomas Evans was opposed to him, and, after the young lawyer had been somewhat flowery in his opening speech, began his reply by humming with his rich voice:

> "The flowers that bloom in the spring, tra-la!
> Have nothing to do with the case!"

He, himself, has given in his "Pastime Stories" the overwhelming reply of his client, who had been caught red-handed with the little stolen ox which he was offering for sale in the market when arrested for larceny. Judge Minor had assigned the young practitioner as counsel. After "saving what points" he could as the evidence developed, and the jury had brought in a verdict imposing a full term in the penitentiary for his client, Page said: "I should like to apply for an appeal. Have you any money to pay for copying the record?"

To which the appreciative prisoner replied: "No; ef I'd 'a' had any money, I'd 'a' got me a lawyer!"

It was this judge who had the young lawyer as his groomsman and supplied a dress coat for the wedding.

When one day a client came into the young lawyer's office, he found an old colored man asleep in one of the office chairs. Going out quietly, he brought in a photographer, who took a picture of the scene, under which he wrote: "Page's Only Client."

Once while arguing a case in the Court of Appeals, in which he had not answered some questions asked by the judges satisfactorily to himself, he concluded by saying he hoped any trepidation he might have exhibited would not be attributed to any doubt as to the righteousness of his client's case; that it was due to the fact that in the presence of that court he never felt at ease. The president of the court made a neat reply, and it was not long before the young lawyer had the good opinion of that as he did of the other courts in which he practised.

Once, when he had invested the money of his clients, who were cousins of his, upon the examination of title to real estate made by

himself in Henrico County, just outside of Richmond, there was discovered a judgment against the borrower gotten in the federal court at Norfolk which took precedence over the deed of trust which secured the loan Under the then federal statute the registry of a federal judgment to take precedence over a deed of trust was not necessary in the county where the land lay. When the note fell due, it took nearly all of the young lawyer's savings to repay his clients, who never heard what their young kinsman suffered from his mistake. The law has now happily been changed. And for a federal court judgment to take precedence over a deed of trust given by the judgment debtor, it must be recorded in the county or city in which the land lies prior to the record of the trust deed, though the judgment relates to the opening day of the term of the court.

Page attended the courts in Hanover, his native county, regularly, and often went to the adjoining counties. In his own county he was often associated with his father. In several very important cases he took a leading part, sometimes on the opposite side from his father, who always referred to him as "the learned counsel."

His office in Richmond was in Shafer's Building, between Main Street and the Capitol Square. There for a time he had his bachelor quarters—a room adjoining his law office —with William Kemp as his attendant, who to the day of his death always inquired after his friend Mr. Page.

At "Oakland" there is now a piece of furniture in the dining-room, the upper part of which is used for holding cups and saucers. It was the first piece of furniture he ever bought when he opened his law office. And his mother used to recall the fact that he sent her a carpet bought with his first considerable fee.

When he first went to Richmond, he had as a roommate Chestnut Haile, who had been a friend of his brother at Hanover Academy, then taught by Colonel Hilary P. Jones and now the home of his son Admiral Hilary P. Jones, the commander of the United States Fleet. Then he went to live at Mrs. Mayo's, where he made a lasting friendship with her nephew Henry Wise Hobson, a very distinguished lawyer who at the time of his death was one of the leaders of the Denver bar.

It was the son, bearing his father's name,

who was visited when sorely wounded in France by his godfather, Thomas Nelson Page, then ambassador to Italy. And it was this godson who, as a clergyman, helped at the last service in Washington when his godfather was buried.

The "Richmond Club," as it existed when Page became a member, was notable for the clever men it contained. Those men really conversed, and by their talk adorned any subject they discussed. Sainte Beuve, in his "Portrait of Madame de Sévigné," in speaking of the decay of the art of conversation, might well have referred to certain members of the "Richmond Club" when he declared: "There are still remnants of it, an after-glow, which is all the more enjoyable that it seems the revival of a lost art."

Among them were Royall, the counsel for the British bondholders in the matter of the Virginia debt cases, a sort of *Deus ex machina* of the club; Witt, "the eloquent," judge of the hustings court of Richmond; Watkins, known as "Sally," from his French middle name, Sallé; George Ben Johnston, the surgeon; Page McCarty, the editor; Minor, Trigg, and Kean, Joe Bryan, Jim Davis, Tazewell Ellett, the Bollings, the Montagues, Tom Page,

and many others. This was before the Volstead Act.

With Aurelius Sallé Watkins, Page formed an intimate friendship which lasted through life. His criticism of the author's stories, no less than his delightful companionship, were highly prized by the writer. For years they kept house together before Page was married. "Give my love to Sally Watkins, who writes such charming dialect stories over the 'nom-de-plume' of Thomas Nelson Page," a member of the club once wrote, in excusing himself for absence from a party to which he was invited.

There was hardly a gentleman's party in the late eighties in Richmond which considered itself complete unless Watkins had sung "The Grasshopper Song," or danced "the Andalusian dance," Charley Cowardin had told the story of "Zetelle and the Iron Frog," "Chilley" Langhorne and Elmore Hotchkiss had sung "Old Black Joe," and Tom Page had recited "Unc' Gabe's White Folks"! I recall how two little girls in the Page household, who had been sent to bed when a famous literary club met in their home, crept in their nightgowns to the head of the steps and peeped through the banisters as Watkins sang

Innes Randolph's famous "The Grasshopper Song."

One evening to the "Richmond Club" Page took his brother after supper. A military subject—a campaign of the Civil War—being up, Royall asserted with emphasis that Longstreet, by disobeying Lee's order, had lost the battle of Gettysburg, and that if Lee had been Napoleon he would have shot him!

Watkins turned to the visitor, who had just been introduced, and said, so Royall and the others could hear: "Don't mind that man, sir. He thinks Bacon wrote Shakespeare, and that he discovered Napoleon!" Whereupon Royall said, addressing Judge Witt: "Sam, now is not Sally Watkins both irrelevant and impertinent?" Then, turning to Watkins, who showed resentment at being called impertinent, he said: "Now, Sally, you are not a lawyer!" "I'm blamed glad I ain't!" interjected Watkins.

"Impertinence in law," said Royall, not noticing the interruption, "only means irrelevant, *not* pertinent! You know, Sally, I'd be the last person in the world to be rude or insolent to you; but Sam," addressing Witt, "you are a judge, and I insist on your opinion! Is Watkins relevant? Is Watkins per-

tinent? When I'm talking about Gettysburg and Lee and Napoleon, to tell our guest, a stranger—no, not a stranger, for Tom Page's brother can never be a stranger to me—am I to be charged with having discovered Napoleon!"

Before Witt could answer Royall whose voice grew louder and louder, Watkins said, in the same droll voice, to the visitor: "Oh, don't mind Royall; he thinks he knows more law than Mr. Green!" This was a reference to Royall's having had a desk in Mr. Green's office; and it was said Mr. Green, who was the most learned man of his day, was sometimes indignant at his young protégé's confident, and, as he declared, *insolent assertion* upon questions of law that he had himself spent weeks over, and was still uncertain about. It was even reported, so Watkins asserted, that Mr. Green swore with unction and used very unparliamentary language to Royall.

Watkins, at Page's request, related his experience upon his return to camp after a visit home. When he got off the train, wearing a "haversack" on which loving fingers had worked his name, "Sergeant A. S. Watkins," he was greeted by a Southern regiment, by which he had to pass to reach his camp, and

who, seeing his name, began, "Howdy, Watkins!" "Hello, Sergeant Watkins!" "Mr. A. S. Watkins, how are you?" "Bill, here's Sergeant Watkins!" until, at last taking in the situation, he said he turned his name into his body and took to his heels. "That was Watkins's forte, taking to his heels," said Trigg laughingly. "Anyway, I knew Confederates from Yankees, which was more than you did," replied Watkins.

Then Trigg told of his enthusiasm to join the Confederate cavalry, and how he had at last gotten a horse and ridden down the road, right into a file of Federal soldiers, whom he told of the whereabouts of the Yankees, and only realized his mistake when they took his horse from him and sent him home, as too little to be a cavalryman. "They wouldn't even take me prisoner!" he added pathetically.

Witt told delightfully of his father, who would not let him go to a dancing-party when he was a boy, because it was unbecoming in a minister's son to be attending dancing-parties; and of how he was sent out to shoot a lamb, and of his killing four of the sheep, who were all lying down when he fired at the lamb. He feared his father died believing he shot them intentionally. "What motive could he

allege?" asked some one. "The instigation of the devil," replied Page. "My father was a minister, too," observed Watkins. "Which proves that ministers' sons are always the worst," retorted Witt. "How about your case?" "I'm the exception that proves the rule!" he added merrily.

Page told of his two neighbors: one asserting, in advocacy of his claims to becoming a member of the general assembly, his opposition to the public-school system, soon to be instituted, and announcing that his education had cost his father only twelve dollars, and the other making the emphatic assertion from the rear of the audience: "And, sir, your father never got the worth of his money!"

So the evening passed, with good cheer and charming talk, in which everybody joined. Page became a great friend of the learned Mr. Green mentioned, as they dined often at the same table, and the old lawyer was, at the table, at least, very affable. One night, at the supper-table, he referred to the "cormorancy" of some lawyers, who took all the proceeds of a suit to pay their fee; at which a female at the other end of the table exclaimed: "I thought that was always the way with lawyers!"

Whereupon the veins in the old man's neck began to swell, and his face flushed as he exclaimed indignantly: "Madam, if that is your opinion of a lawyer, I'll be blamed, madam, if I'm any lawyer!" Then, recalling the fact that he had spoken improperly to a woman, he said apologetically: "Madam, I beg your pardon! I was not aware of your presence!"

When Page went to Richmond to live, he became connected with St. James's Episcopal Church, which had for its rector the venerable Doctor Joshua Peterkin. His son, afterward bishop of West Virginia, had been on the staff of the Confederate chief of artillery with Page's father, and on his return from Appomattox had stopped at "Oakland" on his way home.

Page, then a boy of twelve, had ridden behind him half-way to Richmond, as his cousin had done behind another young soldier, and they brought the horses back to "Oakland" for safe-keeping. They brought, at the same time, the news of Mr. Lincoln's assassination.

Page taught in the Sunday-school and became a vestryman, as he afterward was in the Church of the Holy Trinity, which was a child of St. James. A leading business man of Richmond, who was a member of the young lawyer's Sunday-school class, told recently of

having heard one of the author's stories before it was published, when the class was invited to his room to hear it read.

He took an interest in the public affairs of the city, having, with half a dozen other gentlemen, re-established the Mechanics' Institute, now one of the noble institutions of Richmond, and handsomely supported by city appropriation. Then the gentlemen referred to taught at night, free of any charge, until sufficient funds were raised for its paid teachers.

For years he served as a member of the Board of Aldermen from one of the up-town wards of Richmond, and was elected a lieutenant in the Richmond Light Infantry Blues, the famous old military battalion. One of its former lieutenants O. Jennings Wise, brother of its captain when the young lawyer became a member, had been killed at Roanoke Island. Young Page wore the uniform which had belonged to the gallant Confederate lieutenant, and always took a lively interest in the organization.

It was on one of the camping trips of the famous battalion that an amusing incident occurred that might have been a very serious one. A little bull hitched to a cart was so disturbed by the music of the Blues' band and the

agility of the drum-major marching through the street at "Old Point," that he wheeled his cart with great speed at an enfilading angle through the marching platoons and nearly stampeded the battalion. Captain Wise gave some timely orders, which practically amounted to "Sauve qui peut," and wittily said, when some one commented on the escapade, "that as there had been two battles of 'Bull Run,' this might be called 'Third Bull Run'!"

The young lawyer acted as a member of a committee on grievances of the City Bar Association, and was assigned the disagreeable task of prosecuting a member of the bar for violating the code of ethics, the offense consisting of what was charged as an undue employment of people to secure business. He asked on cross-examination of the witness, a flashily dressed colored boy, who was constantly in the office of the lawyer under investigation, if he was a partner. He said "No." Was he a clerk? "No." "Are you a janitor?" "I am not." "Nor an employee?" "No." "Well," he asked, "what is your relation to that office?" "I am," he answered aptly and promptly, "a kind of *a connectee* of the office!"

IX

HIS LITERARY BEGINNINGS

Since his days at Washington College, Thomas Nelson Page had had a leaning toward newspaper work as a profession. At the University of Virginia he had written for the magazine things that "gripped." Many times he had had "a *billet*" to represent some newspaper as reporter at some college commencement or political convention. He used to tell of how he and his friend Armistead Gordon had resented Emerson's not giving them his manuscript read at the University of Virginia, and how they had roasted him for thus refusing them. Of this incident Gordon has written in the January, 1923, *Scribner's Magazine*. In 1889, when Page and his younger brother went to Europe, he wrote for a Richmond paper; but his purchase of a country paper in his native county, just as he went as ambassador to Italy, was the nearest realization of his ambition to be a newspaper man.

His taste in literature he credited to his father, who rarely failed to direct his son's

attention to what was best therein. So skilfully was this done, that the method was hardly noticed by which the boy was lured into the paths of knowledge. At the "Oakland" table, when there were no guests, some literary subject would be brought up. It might be a date, a quotation, or an author. Doctor Johnson's sayings, Goldsmith's poetry, and Pope's "Essay on Man" were familiar topics. When he and his brother landed in London, they surprised their friends by one saying he would go to see Goldsmith's grave in the corner of the Temple Church, and the other saying he would see Tom Pinch's fountain near the Inns of Court. They both agreed that for their father's sake they must see Pembroke College, Oxford, where was the room of Doctor Johnson, and the hallway down which he had thrown the shoes left by a fellow student who sympathized with his poverty but incurred his wrath for the liberty taken when the shoes were left at his door.

On one occasion Page's mother said during one of the literary conversations at the table: "I don't like Doctor Johnson; I agree with Mrs. Boswell that he was a bear!" "You must let Tom read you," replied her husband, "Carlyle's account of Johnson stand-

ing bareheaded in the rain near the market, trying to make reparation for an unfilial act, when his pride prevented his minding his father's book-stall."

Among the charming homes in and near Richmond into which young Page was always welcomed were "Brook Hill," home of the Stewarts, and the home of Doctor Robert Coleman, a distinguished physician. He had been "raised" near "Oakland," and his step-father, Doctor George Fleming, of "Chantilly," was the "Oakland" family physician already mentioned as having been present the night the author was born.

It was in the Coleman home that the author of "In Ole Virginia" met the author of "The Old Virginia Gentleman"—Doctor George W. Bagby—whose stories Page afterward edited, and whose family have ever been his devoted friends. Doctor Bagby was then assistant secretary of the commonwealth, and State librarian. Of him Page wrote in the Introduction to a volume of Bagby's "Essays," published by the Scribners:

> Bagby was the first to picture Virginia as she was. Other writers had magnified her through an idealism, colored by reading of other life and other times.
>
> Carruthers, Simms, Kennedy, Cooke, and the other

Southern writers, all picture the life of the South as reflected through the lenses of Scott and his imitators, such as James. They dressed their gentlemen in wigs and ruffles and short clothes, and their ladies in brocades and quilted stomachers, and flashing jewels; housed them in palaces and often moved them on stilts, with measured strut as automata strung on wires, and worked, however, skilfully, from behind the scenes. They spoke book English and lived, if they lived at all, in slavish imitation of men of England, mirrored from the printed pages of generations gone. . . . And our people read English books, instead of American, to Poe's sad chagrin. . . .

In this desert of unreality came a new writer, a contributor to newspapers and magazines, who, discarding the stilts and struts and the painted palaces, pictured the old Virginia homesteads, set back, simple and peaceful and plain, under their immemorial oaks and locusts, with the life lived there, with its sweetness and simplicity and charm. He first of all discovered that in the simple plantation homes was a life more beautiful and charming than any that the gorgeous palaces could reveal, and that its best presentation was that which had the divine beauty of truth.

Then he adds: "It is always difficult to gauge the measure of influences, but one writer has always felt that to George W. Bagby's pioneer work, among the memories of the old Virginia life in its simplicity, he owes an unending debt of gratitude. He opened his eyes to the beauty that lay at hand, and whispered into his ear the charm that sang to

his soul of the South." He closes the Introduction to Bagby's work with the statement: "To my mind, his Essay on 'The Old Virginia Gentleman' is the most charming picture of American life ever drawn." At a dinner given in after-years in New York, at which were his friend Charles E. Bolling and his bride, the author proposed the health of the bride as the wife of his dear friend and the daughter of the South's great literary man, Doctor George W. Bagby.

The first attempt made by Page in dialect writing were some verses called "Unc' Gabe's White Folks," already mentioned as being popular in the social life of Richmond. They appeared in *Scribner's Monthly*, and appealed tenderly to those who had known the old order. It might be deemed an epitome of his subsequent dialect stories. The author's recitation of these pathetic lines is well remembered by those who heard him.

When the author went to New York to speak at a dinner given him after "Marse Chan" appeared, his aunt from "Oakland," in writing to her niece in Lexington, describes the author's report of his visit in charming fashion. It is "Miss Thomasia" speaking, as if from "Red Rock." The letter is dated

March 30, 1885. After going to church in the morning, and teaching her Sunday-school of *ten* in the evening, she was too tired to write the day before. Then she adds:

Tom came up Saturday night and left this morning. His visit to New York was a great success. I wish you could hear him tell of his club dinner; but as you can't you may like to hear what I can remember. A servant met him at the head of the stairs, and he was carried into a little room, where was a table spread with pickles, etc. to tempt your appetite; then he was introduced to about a hundred or so—young men—and they were taken into the dining room, with a large round table. There were twenty guests. The servants were in livery—the prevailing color being yellow. What struck Tom most was that most of their men were young men—not over 30—one or two were about 40. The names I remember were Scribner, Lathrop, Bishop, Burlingame, etc. The dinner was served in courses. In the center of the table was a bank of flowers about a yard square. The highest part being jonquils surrounded by blue hyacinths—these by the loveliest jacquemennot roses and bunches of Nephetos buds. Then smilax was twined, and intertwined with the wine glasses—and wild all over the table. At each plate lay a boutonnière and jonquils. The dessert was—I don't know what—some kind of ice in an ink-stand of china surrounded by a candy saucer. There was a pen by each ink-stand of paper. There were figures of sugar candy—statuettes—I may call them. The table was too large for you to talk across, so you could only talk to those near you. Their curiosity about the war, and the negroes is intense. On coming away Tom gave one of the waiters a $ and

asked him to express the china ink-stand to him in Richmond, which he said he would pay at the other end. The servants were not allowed to take fees from the guests. When he got home he found two ink-stands—but alas the woman's hand was broken. They finished off with coffee; but Tom could not tell what sort of cups they drank out of. His manuscript was submitted to Burlingame who criticized it severely, apologizing and saying you must not write below "Marse Chan." Tho' they praised it too. So it has all to be re-written and recast. It shows what experience is. He felt all they said was just. He lunched with some of these men who were married. One young man—after being introduced—passed on and then ran back, saying, "I did not catch your name 'Marse Chan.'" They were all as kind as possible. I asked Tom what he talked to them. He told them what he remembered of the war, of riding behind his mother when she went away to try to get meal to feed the negroes; how well they behaved. His negro dialect is what astonishes them most. They have a large dictionary of negro words but it is unlike ours. Tom has meanwhile another story which the Scribners will publish in the *Century*. The highest compliment to Tom was being invited to dine informally with the Scribners; his wife is a young woman with a lovely baby.

On another piece of paper she writes:

I open this letter to tell you of Tom's telling those gentlemen of Dr. Peterkin's beautiful mention of General Grant, and asking the prayers of all Christian people for the dying warrior. He has been on my list of sick people to be prayed for for some time. May God Help him in his hour of need.

X

AS A WRITER OF SHORT STORIES

No writer, perhaps, ever had a greater success with his first story than had the author of "Marse Chan." Although he received but eighty dollars for it, and the publishers held it for more than three years before publishing it, the reception which it had was very wonderful, and it has been described by a Southern editor as the "Epitaph of a Civilization."

It is the simple story of life in Virginia before and during the Civil War, told by an aged negro to a traveller who by chance is going along the highway on horseback, and makes inquiry about an old place he had passed. The scene is laid in eastern Virginia, and is given as happening in 1872—seven years after the end of the war. The story may be read in forty or fifty minutes, but he who reads it without tears has never been found among those who had known the life it described. With fewer characters than any Greek play—two men, the horseman and Sam, a woman who only appears at the end and is asked but

one question, and a dog—there is given in the meagre space mentioned the whole history of the South in its struggle to maintain itself against the world.

Told, as it is, by one supposed to have been benefited by the downfall of the old order but who still dwells in the glamour of the past and remembers the glory of former days, there is combined all the strength and pathos that such a situation could develop in a mind keenly alert and appreciative to every incident connected with it. The author was writing under that canon in which he believed: "Write about what you know."

His cousin Channing, who had often visited "Oakland" and gone to the famous school, Hanover Academy, in the neighborhood, and had a gallant record in the Confederate army and afterward a distinguished career as a learned physician in New York, gave the name to the story: "Marse Chan. A Tale of Old Virginia." In its brief compass the author has touched nearly every chord of the human heart and given many scenes from the drama of the life of the South of that period.

Numerous efforts have been made at dialect writing, but only a few of those who have attempted it have succeeded in giving the

spirit as well as the letter of the negro's life and speech. Irwin Russell, Joel Chandler Harris, Harry Stillwell Edwards, Armistead C. Gordon, Benjamin B. Valentine, and Thomas Nelson Page are perhaps best known. Page's "One Mourner," a tribute to the memory of Irwin Russell, is as good as anything he has written. It is the heartfelt tribute of a negro to the man who "wrote about niggers and mules and gear."

The origin of the story of "Marse Chan" is told by the author in the Preface to "In Ole Virginia," in the beautiful "Plantation" edition of his works. The fly-leaf of the volume at "Oakland" has inscribed in the author's handwriting: "For Mamma, from Tom with all his love and gratitude, Christmas 1906." The Preface contains the following statement:

> In the autumn of 1880, a letter was shown the author, which had been taken from the pocket of a dead private in a Georgia regiment on one of the battle-fields around Richmond.
>
> It was written in an illiterate hand on coarse blue Confederate paper, and was from a young girl in Georgia to her sweetheart. In it she told him that she had discovered since he left home that she loved him, and that she did not know why she had been so cruel to him before he went away; that in fact she had loved

him ever since they had gone to school together in the little school house in the woods when he had been so good to her, and that now if he would get a furlough and come home she would marry him. This was all, except of course a postscript. As if fearful that such a temptation might prove too much even for the man she loved, across the blue Confederate paper were scrawled these words: "Don't come without a furlough; for if you don't come honorable, I won't marry you."

The date of the letter was not more than two weeks earlier than that of the battle in which her lover fell, and the natural comment was, "So he got his furlough through a bullet." This idea took possession of me, and in about ten days I had written "Marse Chan." This story was promptly accepted but was not published until over three years afterwards.

The impression made by the story was very great. At the Coleman home in Richmond, already mentioned, the doctor entered to find his family in tears. Startled at finding those usually so gay, weeping, he asked what was the matter. They said: "We are reading a story by Tom Page." "How silly you are to let anything written by that snip of a boy make you cry," he exclaimed. Then they challenged him to read it, whereupon the doctor began to read. Soon he laid the magazine down and began to wipe his spectacles. Then he threw the periodical away and burst out of the room, saying he'd have to have a new pair

of glasses, as he could not see to read out of the pair he had!

The story "Meh Lady" was named after a charming friend of his in Richmond, and the character of "Uncle Billy" was based upon her servant of that name, who called her "Meh Lady."

When the author read from manuscript the story of "Meh Lady" at the home of Mr. Thomas Branch, the well-known banker, his nephew told me the venerable man exclaimed: "Stop, boy! You make me cry, and I don't want to cry!" The effect of these stories was not confined to those who had known the ancient régime of the South. An article written since the author's death by T. P. O'Connor, in a London paper, describes the effect of the story upon Henry Ward Beecher. "He had been one of the advocates of the North," writes the eloquent Irishman, "and one of the most vehement leaders of the antislavery campaign.

"Finding himself one day in the house of Dr. Joseph Parker, and the lovely wife whom everybody loved, he asked that he might be consoled by hearing the lady read. She read 'Marse Chan,' the great preacher holding his wife's hand, and when the story was finished,

the stern opponent of the South and of slavery was weeping copiously. . . . This man all strength and emotion, all fierce vigor in defending his ideas, and all emotion in his impressionability, I saw weeping as he heard the story in the life of one of the slaveholding families that he had helped to bring to defeat and disaster."

Judge Barton, of Page's home circuit, wrote the author: "I don't know whether your eyes were dry when you finished writing 'Marse Chan,' but I can tell you mine were not when I finished reading it." Perhaps the learned judge had in mind the famous canon of the "Ars Poetica":

> *"Si vis me flere, dolendum est*
> *Primum ipsi tibi!"*

The success of "Marse Chan" made the writing and publishing of the author's other stories but a matter of time. "Unc' Edinburg's Drowndin, A Plantation Echo," "Meh Lady, A Story of the War," "Ole 'Stracted," "No Haid Pawn," and "Polly," which were subsequently published in a volume known as "In Ole Virginia," soon appeared, and were in due course followed by the other tales and novels. Of these, perhaps "Red Rock" is the

best known, it being a story of the reconstruction period in the South after the war. "Ole 'Stracted" was written in a single night, while the author was sitting up with the body of the mother of one of his young friends in Richmond. His father ever maintained that it was his best story.

"Two Little Confederates," the best of his child's stories, is the life at "Oakland" during the Civil War. It has had great popularity, and is still the delight of children.

When the little grandson of a United States admiral was visiting at "Oakland" after the book was published, he wrote his mother, asking if she thought he ought to continue reading it; "for you know," he added, "my sympathy is going fast with the Confederates."

Perhaps this Northern boy was exemplifying what the author wrote, that he "had never wittingly written a line which he did not hope might tend to bring about a better understanding between the North and the South, and finally lead to a more perfect union."

Though Page's stories, as they appeared, received the commendation of thousands of people, who hailed them as the picture of a vanished civilization, there were some who were not pleased, and a few even expressed their

disapproval in the press. One charge made by a well-known citizen of Virginia was that "Meh Lady's" marrying a Northern soldier could not have been possible. This, in spite of a number of cases which had happened within the knowledge of the author of the story.

He had made as his rule the conduct of Buffon, the famous Frenchman, who never replied to criticism of his work, because if true it could not be answered, and if untrue he did not care. But when a Virginian, well known to the author, undertook to limit the location of the story to the author's own neighborhood, and asserted that he knew all the people in that neighborhood, and that no such case ever occurred there, or could have occurred there, the author was moved to reply over his own signature:

I am complimented that my story should so have impressed the critic, as to create in his mind a sense of actual locality. To relieve his mind, I will tell him that "Meh Lady" is a romance. . . . I would further suggest to him that a romance can be judged only by a standard of romance; and that idealization is by some deemed allowable in such works. The critic, however, has authority for his position. A noted English reviewer objected to Goldsmith's "The Deserted Village," that there was no such village in Ireland. I am indeed fain to admit that by any standard my story

has more defects than the one the critic's assiduity has discovered. It is perhaps for this reason, that I am unwilling to admit those which it has not. If it were not that time is too valuable, I would request the critic to read the story again—not in the spirit of a small boy going through a garden merely looking for stones to fling at birds, who sees neither the grass nor the flowers, but hunts only for stones—but with a more literary temper. Perhaps he may in such case, find a deeper significance than a "quibble" in "Meh Lady's" overcoming her pride, and selling the mule to buy white flour and delicacies for her mother.

With this, I must leave the critic the field. We look at the subject from entirely different standpoints—he from that of a mathematical table; I from that of a romance. I do not propose to defend further my stories. They must stand on their own merits, and if they require a defender they ought to perish.

THOMAS NELSON PAGE.

Among the charming girls who came to Richmond during young Page's life there was Anne Seddon Bruce, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Charles Bruce, of "Staunton Hill," in Charlotte County, Va. She soon attracted and was, after an assiduous courtship, attracted by the young lawyer and writer, and they were married on the 26th of July, 1886, and went abroad on their bridal trip.

The bride was very lovely, and as a young married woman had many friends among the people of Richmond, where she had gone to

school. She had much beauty and a charming sense of humor. She told of one of their old servants, who, when taken to task by her father for having left the church to which his owner's family belonged and joined another, had replied: "Master, don' you think yo' chuch is too dismal a religion for a nigger?"

Page used to tell how on the morning of his first visit to "Staunton Hill" he had asked "Lazarus," who came in to make his fire, if they had prayers before breakfast, and was told: "Yes, suh; but not regular!" And how Mr. Bruce, to whom he told the conversation at the table, had said that as his children had been away at school, and his wife did not get up as early as he had to do, to ride over his plantation, he had not observed the good custom for ten years.

The young couple lived for a time at the Exchange and Ballard House, the fashionable hotel of Richmond, and then went to housekeeping on Grace Street, in the western part of the city.

From the latter place the startling intelligence came that the lovely young woman had died after a three days' illness, just before Christmas, 1888. Of her he wrote on the stone that marks, in beautiful Hollywood, the

resting-place of her remains: "Here lies all that is mortal of an angel."

There are hymn tablets in St. James's Church, and a beautiful stained-glass window in the Church of the Holy Trinity, as memorials to her. And as a further memorial to her, and in the hope that it might induce others to unite in similar memorials to loved ones, he, with the assistance of other friends, established the "Rosemary Public Library," named after Hamlet's "Rosemary—that's for remembrance." The library and endowment have now been accepted by the city of Richmond as a feature of the John Marshall High School Library.

His wife's death was a staggering blow to the young lawyer. Fortunately for him, her sister, who was married to a distinguished official in the government service, came to Richmond with her two lovely little girls and made her home with her brother-in-law at 1101 Grove Avenue. To this hospitable home came many visitors, and Page's younger brother came from another city to live in Richmond, and made his home with them. The house was charmingly kept by its sweet hostess, and it was "open house" for the whole connection. The rule was that either mem-

ber of the household could bring in one guest without notice, but if more than one was coming the hostess should have twenty minutes' notice.

There was some consternation when, the day being *Friday*, Page arrived with his devoted friend, John Tabb—Father Tabb, the poet, and a young priest—to luncheon. It was not long, however, before luncheon was announced, with oysters cooked in many ways. "How did you, brought up by my cousin, Farley Berkeley, get into the Roman Catholic Church?" asked Page's mother. "Madam, I read the ritualistic books, and I thought it better to be all than a part," he replied politely. To which the lady said earnestly: "Well, God bless you!" "He has blessed me to-day by bringing me here to see Tom's mother," he said sweetly.

It was in this house that when the window-sill was a little too high for John, the youngest of the family, to see the street below, the author placed two thick volumes on the floor, that that young gentleman might have a look out upon the world outside.

While in the Grove Avenue house Page did some of his best work. It was there that he wrote the story "On Newfound River," dedi-

cated "to the dear memory of Anne Bruce Page." The story took its name from the small stream already mentioned, which flowed within three miles of "Oakland." How it came to be called a river may be accounted for in two ways: one, that it was named while there was a freshet, when the broad valley was covered with water; and the other, the reason given by an old man to a young colored boy, that "'twas a *creek* up to fifty miles, and after that 'twas a river." I fear, however, that the last argument does not apply, as the stream is not half that length.

At that time he wrote some of his well-known child stories, in which the little girls, Evelyn and Annie, appeared by name and in character, if not connected with the incidents. When his description of an "Old Virginia Sunday" appeared, which he alleged was kept in Puritan fashion, and said the main recreation of the boys was riding to water the horses of guests who came on their way from church to dinner at "Oakland," one of his cousins, living in New York, who had spent part of her childhood at "Oakland," wrote that while he and the other boys were riding the horses to water, she and the other girls were up-stairs trying on the lady visitors' bonnets.

XI

HIS TRIP ABROAD

In the spring of 1889 Page and his brother went abroad. The trip to Europe was one long to be remembered. They made many friends and had the entrée into many charming homes. Colonel Venable's letter to Lord Wolseley, who had been at General Lee's headquarters in Virginia during the Civil War, gained them the attention and hospitality of the commander-in-chief in the Soudan, and an invitation to the Wolseley home had to be declined reluctantly because of their absence in the north of England.

Miss Mary Lee's letters, introducing them as her cousins, made them friends of some of her friends there. They visited the Gilliats, near Windsor, at their home, and the Isaac Hendersons in Bolton Gardens and in the Isle of Wight. The voyage over was made on the *City of Paris*, that took over the United States minister and his family to the Court of St. James. The acquaintance made on board

ship ripened into a lifelong friendship. Once the eyes of an English servant nearly popped out of his head, as he announced, with the cards of Mrs. and Miss Lincoln, which they had been gracious enough to leave at the apartment of the young Virginians: "Wy, sor, she and har darter wor at *hour* door in their coach." It was an invitation to their house, and through that courtesy Page and his brother were introduced to many charming people, and saw much of English life.

At the Lincolns' home they witnessed the meeting of Mrs. General McClellan and Mrs. General Logan. The impressive thing was that each referred to the other's husband and the high esteem in which each of the great Federal soldiers held the other. With the Lincolns the author and his brother attended the Marchioness of Salisbury's reception, where were many of the British notables.

Page's work had attracted attention and given him an entrée into the literary world. The Edmund Gosses had him and his brother to dinner, where they were met by Doctor Gildersleeve and his daughter. He was also a guest at Max O'Rell's, who was then in London. Upon the curtain in the reception-room was pinned a list of the names of the guests.

Of Oxford, Page wrote:

The colleges lie scattered through the quaint town which Alfred the Great loved, representing every age of English learning and of English greatness. We visited first Christ Church College, the largest college in England, except Trinity College, Cambridge. The Hall is filled with portraits of the most distinguished graduates, of whom that of Gladstone by Millais was the latest, and the chapel, the old Cathedral, was most interesting and beautiful. We took a turn through the justly far-famed Christ Church meadows. These, and the gardens of Magdalen (Maudlin), Baliol, St. Johns and New Colleges are among the spots which inspired Matthew Arnold to write the lovely passage in the preface to one of his essays on criticism in which he describes his beloved Oxford.

He refers to Pembroke College, with the little ten-foot-square room where lived and studied Samuel Johnson: "Which college still owns the priceless possession, the desk on which the great doctor wrote the dictionary which fixed the language of the English tongue." Of the Bodleian Library he wrote: "I may as well undertake to describe the ocean." Then he adds: "Oxford is the cloister life in the midst of the nineteenth century."

With the T. P. O'Connors the Pages spent much time. Their house was as home to them. Mrs. O'Connor was the lovely Bessie

Paschal, of Texas. Her cousin had married the Pages' cousin, therefore they were her kin, and that was enough. In their house Page met the wonderful group of Irishmen who were then with Mr. Gladstone in opposition to the Salisbury ministry—Justin McCarthy, with whom was his son Huntley and his daughter Charlotte, Timothy Healy, the head of "the Free State of Ireland," and others. Page and his brother had the privileges of the House of Commons, and heard the great debates of the period—Sexton picturing the woes of Ireland and Balfour pleading the justification of England. One night they witnessed one of the most turbulent scenes in the history of that august body, when the chairman had to call the speaker in to settle the differences between two irate members.

Page heard Mr. Gladstone say one night to the house: "You administer the laws in England in an English spirit, the laws in Scotland in a Scotch spirit; but you do not administer the laws in Ireland in an Irish spirit!" It was very dramatically said, and its full import meant a protest in favor of Ireland. One night they drove through "Whitechapel," where that day Jack-the-Ripper had committed one of the dreadful murders which startled all London.

The author was interested in the trial of Parnell against *The Times* newspaper, in which Mr. Asquith and Sir Charles Russell were of learned counsel, and he and his brother went with Mr. O'Connor, who was a member of the deputation sent by the Liberal party in the House of Commons to France at the time of the centennial celebration of the fall of the Bourbons. The British ministry had withdrawn their representative, and the opposition party were taking a strategic advantage of their opponents.

The visitors at Calais stayed at the Hotel Dessein, made famous in Sterne's "Sentimental Journey." Page slept in Tristram Shandy's bed. The old lady who owned and kept the hotel, Madame Dessein, was said to be eighty-four years old. So ungallant a fact might not be recorded but that as a child she remembered Napoleon. There was Bennet Burleigh, who had been in Richmond during the Civil War as correspondent of a London paper, who sent his love to mutual friends by the Virginians.

After Page had gone to bed in Calais his brother went with Mr. O'Connor to a banquet given to the British deputation, and, when upon their return O'Connor announced to the

occupant of Mr. Shandy's bed that his brother had replied eloquently to a toast to the United States *in French*, the author of "Marse Chan" charged such eloquence in a foreign tongue to the stimulating and enlightening power of the wine of the country. Years afterward, when Mr. O'Connor came to Richmond, at a dinner given by W. R. Meredith at which the Virginians who had been at Calais that night were present, and the question was raised as to whether Page's brother had responded in French to the toast mentioned, the Irish orator settled the question, asserting that Page's brother was "a *grreat Frinch* orator!"

The Virginians attended the dinner next day at Calais given President Carnot, to whom they were introduced on a yacht. He was gracious enough to say that he hoped soon to have the pleasure of welcoming them upon the soil of France.

From Calais, Page and his brother went to Paris, and saw the city upon the occasion of the centennial celebration of the taking of the Bastile. Paris was illuminated, the Eiffel Tower being lighted up to the top. They also saw the return of the remains of Carnot, "organizer of victory," and the President's ancestor, and the great welcome given by France,

as they were deposited with all pomp and ceremony in "the Pantheon." They all attended a great ball given by M. Ives Guyot, minister of public works. A very interesting thing was the distinguished host's taking part in the little amusing play that was given for the entertainment of his guests.

As one morning the author and his brother, with two friends, newly arrived from Richmond, were being driven in a coupé by a French *cocher*, one of them said in his best Parisian French to the little driver, who had expressed a great admiration for General Boulanger, who had left France: "He has run away!" To which the little driver replied vehemently, as he cracked his whip over his head: "Oui; mais, il reviendra!" In this case, however, he was a better driver than he was a prophet. From Paris the Virginians went to Switzerland, stopping at Lake Lucerne, where they visited the famous "Lion of Lucerne" carved out of the rock, and ascended "the Righi." They saw the scene of the William Tell apple-shooting incident. They were then called back to England, stopping in Milan to see the cathedral and "The Last Supper" of Leonardo da Vinci.

One result of the visit to Calais was an invi-

tation to visit "Brynterion," the home of Pritchard Morgan, Esq., member of the House of Commons for Merthyr Tydfil, in Wales, to meet Parnell, the great Irish leader, who, with a party of gentlemen, "was to be down for a week." Though Mr. Parnell did not come, the beautiful Morgan home surpassed all expectation. The route thither lay through the neighborhood of the churchyard of Gray's "Elegy," and of Windsor, through Oxford.

Page wrote:

A little further on was Banbury, one of the places we earliest visited on our grandfather's knee. Though we travel now by an express train, we feel a vague regret that we can nevermore take the old way and

"Ride a cock horse to Banbury Cross
To see an old woman get a white horse,
With rings on her fingers and bells on her toes
And she shall have music wherever she goes."

Then through Warwickshire, a garden. Off to the left, as we emerge from Leamington, rise above the Avon "the cloud-capped towers and gorgeous palaces" of Warwick Castle. . . . Just away to the left a few miles are the ruins of Kenilworth, and a league or two further on Stratford-on-Avon itself. We pass presently through "the black country" of mines and manufacturies, of which George Eliot said it looked as if the devil had passed over it, dragging his rake behind him. Through Shrewsbury, where Hotspur fell, and where

the British crown was saved, and where Sir John Falstaff won so much of his renown.

We proceed and are in Wales. This is Owen Glendower's country. The name of the great Welsh champion is associated with every spot through the district. . . . The Red Lion Inn of the town of Balla was a perfect Bower. "Our Boots" was recommended as a very good hand with a razor; but remembering Dr. Bagby's description of his shave by the boots at Briles's it was determined to try the professional across the street.

In speaking of the lady of the house, Mr. Morgan's sister, Page wrote:

She is very small and fragile, but when I saw her wait quietly while the pony in the village cart stood on his hind-legs and then bounce in as he came to the ground, I recognized the spirit which in her small person managed the establishment.

At "Brynterion" he met Mr. William Senior, the fish editor of the London *Field*. Of him he wrote: "His nom-de-plume is known wherever the trout and salmon swim. Fishing with him is a passion." They fished together in the famous lake, Tel-y-llyn (called "Tethlyn"), and Page described the road which winds through one of the famous passes in Wales. "King Arthur, or Launcelot-of-the-Lake and Guinevere may have ridden this

way. Caerleon is not far away, and at the top of the pass a sight meets the eye rich enough to reward a queen."

There is now at "Oakland" a reel given by the great fisherman to Page's brother, who caught the largest bass of the party, just outside the bar at Barmouth. Of this the author wrote to the Richmond paper: "One evening we fished for bass, when Rosewell caught a very large fellow, the largest that had been taken for some time."

He described Harleck Castle, "with its view of Snowden towering away in the background, and with the traditions of sieges and captures and massacres, and a fine reply of one of the governors, who, when summoned to surrender, replied that 'he had held a castle in Flanders so long that the old women had talked of him in Wales, and that now he would hold one in Wales so long that they should talk of him in Flanders.'"

Then he added: "Caerleon and Lyonesse are now only names; but the Knights of the Round Table live again in the literature of an age which is nearer their high ideal than any which has gone before."

One thing about English hospitality he greatly admired:

In the evening every one endeavors to do his or her part to make the time pass pleasantly. I have been much struck with the readiness of every one to contribute to the entertainment of the company.

Upon their return to London, Page and his brother spent an evening with Mr. and Mrs. Gladstone at Sir Theodore Fry's, whom they had met at dinner at Mr. Ponsonby's. In the Ponsonby home was hanging in the dining-room the famous picture by Sir Edwin Landseer "The Return from the Hunt," the boy on the pony with the game tied to the saddle. Mr. Ponsonby, our host, was the boy.

Mr. Gladstone said he had never had time to visit the United States, but he added he hoped to live long enough to come to the wonderful country. His wife called across the room to the great statesman: "My dear, Mr. Page says the *City of Paris*, on which they crossed, broke the record coming over." He replied: "How interesting; tell us about it, sir, if you please."

The great Englishman talked as many another educated gentleman would, naturally and quietly, and it was afterward a question with Page if he could have told, from anything said, that he had been talking with one of the great men of the time. He spoke of the

great satisfaction he felt at having that day received a resolution of the Senate of the State of New York expressing sympathy with the Liberal party.

Of Mr. Gladstone there was going the rounds the remarks of the sardonic Mr. Labouchère, editor of *Truth*, that he did not mind Mr. Gladstone always "having a jack up his sleeve; but what he did mind was his saying that God Almighty put it there."

Page and his brother, with Gordon McCabe and Robert L. Harrison, who were then in London, saw the "March Past" and "Trooping of the Colors" of the British army at Aldershot. There was a curious meeting in a narrow passageway between the Americans and the German Crown Prince, with his party, who was taking part in the manœuvres, and rode with the Duke of Cambridge so hard, it was said, as to fatigue the valiant old gentleman who then commanded the British army. At the end of the meeting in the narrow passageway into which Page and his party were shown by, perhaps, a misinformed official, the German deputation had none the better of the situation, for the Americans went as they had been directed, and arrived in a most excellent position for seeing the movements of the army,

which was making its best showing for the Queen's grandson, the future Kaiser. He later was to learn what that army, which he saw that day on parade, was to be when in action on the fields of Belgium and France.

The Pages saw "Donovan" win "the Derby," and his owner, the Duke of Portland, lead him, after the race, through the admiring crowd to the foot of the stand where was his fiancée, the beautiful Miss Dallas Yorke. Thomas Nelson Page's love of thoroughbred horses was inherited, for his ancestor Mann Page, of Rosewell, imported thoroughbreds from England in the colonial days, and the author disposed of some good thoroughbreds in his will. Before going to Europe as ambassador, he presented to the government of the United States his fine thoroughbred stallion "Black Dick," and this sire for cavalry horses was for years kept at the remount station near Front Royal, Va. Down Piccadilly the Virginians drove behind the four-in-hand of their kinsman Philip N. Page, of the Argentine Republic, who was then in London.

And while in London the Pages went with their kinsman Doctor R. C. M. Page to the old Norman Church, near Bedfont, in Middlesex, where their Page ancestors lived and were

buried, at the time of the settlement of Virginia, among them being one to whom a monument was erected, so the inscription said, by his dutiful son, John Page, of the county of York, in the colony of Virginia.

With the O'Connors the Virginians saw Henry Irving and Miss Terry in several Shakespearian rôles, and from Albani's box heard her sing the "Lohengrin." They also saw Beerbohm Tree.

XII

HIS LECTURE TOURS

Upon his return to Richmond in the autumn of 1889, the Lecture bureau of the country was attracted by the popularity of Page's stories, and offered him tempting opportunities for professional readings. He read in Chickering Hall to a great audience, who gave every evidence of appreciation and satisfaction.

Soon he became one of the most popular of platform entertainers. His readings from his own stories became well advertised all over the country. With Francis Hopkinson Smith he made a tour of the country, and their reading was nowhere more successful than in the city of Richmond. This association with "Frank Smith" ripened into a lifelong friendship.

A few days before he started on this lecturing tour, he made an offer to some young friends who were dining with him, that if they

would put up a certain modest sum, he would share the profits of his readings with them. One of them afterward said he missed the opportunity of his life, as he witnessed Page's successful tour of the country.

Once, when reading in a Southern city, the audience assumed a different air from any he had ever noticed before, and he viewed their evident amusement, at something unaccountable to him, with anxiety. As he saw that they were getting beyond his control, he turned around to see the occasion of their diversion, and there was a little puppy, who had trotted upon the stage, and was attempting to drink out of the pitcher of water provided for the reader, which had been placed under the table-top, on a little shelf. He laid his book down, and set the pitcher on the floor, and the little dog drank his fill, as the audience applauded. Then the reading was resumed.

So popular were his readings, that the last year he made the tour, Colonel Pond, the famous manager, offered him ten thousand dollars for the next season. This was declined, because, as the colonel says in his book, which gives an account of those whom he had been sponsor for, and introduced to the pub-

lic, "Page went to Chicago once too often." This was in reference to his second marriage, which took place in that city on the 6th of June, 1893.

XIII

HIS REMOVAL TO WASHINGTON

Upon his second marriage, Page and his bride went to live in Washington. The place was a compromise between Richmond and Chicago.

Into his life at that time came one of the most notable of women and her two little girls, who until the day of his death were as dear to him as if they had been his own children. Mrs. Page was the great-niece of Governor James Barbour, of Virginia, who had been minister to Great Britain. She had been born in Alexandria, Va., and at the time of her second marriage was thirty-five years old. She was the widow of Mr. Henry Field, of Chicago.

Handsome in her person and carriage, she devoted her life to the comfort and happiness of her husband and those nearest to them. With a splendid mind, which had had the benefit of foreign travel and the association with people of culture and refinement, she brought to her husband that comfort and satisfaction which stood him at all times in good stead in his work as a writer.

As his companion and helpmeet in the trying times when he was ambassador at a foreign court, she bore herself in so noble a fashion as to make the United States Embassy at Rome worthy of the best times in its history. But it was not as the wife of the ambassador in a foreign country, where she did so much to relieve the distress of those who were sufferers from the war then raging, but as the home-loving, devoted wife of the man whom she loved, and whose career was bound up in his devotion to her, that she shone.

Whether as a visitor at his old home, providing presents for children and loved ones at Christmas or on birthdays, or presiding at the head of his table at some beautiful dinner, or attending to affairs of importance connected with business matters, she was ever the charming, gracious, and delightful woman whom her friends enjoyed being with and her husband adored. After association with her, men and women felt they had been in the company of a notable personage, to whom there might be applied the terms "elegance," "distinction," and "goodness."

In an age of fashion, she preserved her piety, and in a society sometimes deemed heartless, she exhibited the virtues of a Christian. All

who were acquainted with her respected her, and they who knew her intimately loved her. She had the "grand air," but it was accompanied by the humility of a devout Christian who, believing firmly in the promises of God, dwelt ever as in His sight.

Mrs. Page had spent much of her youth in Washington and had many friends there. Mrs. Wylie, the wife of the distinguished jurist of that place, was her mother's sister. It was not long before they became very popular, and to their home on Massachusetts Avenue they welcomed their many kinsfolk and friends.

The light of the house were the two little girls already mentioned, who, though now married, and one of them living abroad, have ever been a source of joy and delight to their "dad," as they affectionately called the author. When the Governor of Virginia tendered him the appointment in the summer of 1922 to go as commissioner from Virginia to the Brazilian Exposition, he was anxious to accept it, and only declined when he remembered that to go he would have to miss part of the visit of his daughter, who was coming with her family from England to spend the summer with him and her sister.

The fact that the author was without desire for public office, but was devoting himself to literary work, became generally understood, and made him popular with statesmen, whose bane was the office-seeker. His known interest in art secured for him membership upon the board of governors of the Corcoran Art Gallery, and through his friendship and intimacy with the great English sculptor he secured from Mrs. Herbert Ward, after her husband's death, for the Smithsonian Institution the great collection of African subjects now to be found there, and one of the priceless possessions of the United States. At the time of the author's death he was president of the Association for the Improvement of the Condition of the Appalachian Folk, and was much interested in the work of that association.

XIV

HIS FRIENDSHIPS

THERE is no record of Thomas Nelson Page ever having lost a friend. His literary work brought him many delightful acquaintances, who often became devoted friends. He used to tell of Mark Twain's cordiality and of Mr. Howells's gracious courtesy. Once, when the latter had mistaken a lady in Page's family for Mrs. Page, he wrote a very humorous note explaining his mistake. Mr. Charles Dudley Warner often spent a part of his vacation in the Page home, and there one met "Mr. Dooley," John Kendrick Bangs, Richard Harding Davis, John Fox, and many other charming people whose names are well known to the reading public.

Before he left Richmond, many a literary man who passed through the city or had an engagement there, would find Page's card, with invitation to dinner, either at the club or at his house. It was as his guest in Richmond that Charles Dana Gibson first went to the home from which came his bride, one of

the Langhorne sisters, so famed for beauty and brilliancy; and it was only the other day that another daughter of that family, Lady Nancy Astor, when in Richmond, greeted the author affectionately as the friend of her family and of her childhood. To visit Page in Richmond came Robert H. Russell and William Carey—"Will Carey"—that genial soul, one of the men on the *Century Magazine*, whose wit and humor threatened to keep the Westmoreland Club open beyond the closing hour, and whose reply to "Nathan" next morning, who wanted to know if the gentleman would have some ice with his apollinaris, became famous: "If you cannot bring the apollinaris *and* the ice, bring the ice!" When the young brother of a charming Virginia girl was told by his sister playfully that Mr. Carey was a Yankee, and Carey asked, "What do you think of Yankees?" the little fellow, who later became a major in France in the United States army, replied: "We hates 'em, and we fights 'em!"

Among his literary friends, after Armistead C. Gordon, there were none quite so near to him as Charles and Arthur Scribner and those connected with *Scribner's Magazine*. They not only published his books but they gave

him wise advice about them. It will not be invidious to mention Mr. Robert Bridges and Mr. Burlingame, the latter having followed him within a few days to the land of the spirit. In the Introduction to "In Ole Virginia," in the edition of his works already referred to, Page wrote:

> I am unwilling to close this word to the public with whom I have had dealings for over twenty years, without recording my obligations to Messrs. Charles and Arthur Scribner, who had the courage to back an unknown young writer twenty years ago, and have by their kindness, liberality, and wisdom since then uniformly helped him in so many ways that the business relation has long been eclipsed by that of a delightful friendship.

On a visiting-card, left for the author and his wife upon their being in Richmond at his brother's house, his friend Captain Gordon McCabe wrote:

> Dear Tom: Sorry to miss Mrs. Page and your Worship. We want you and your wife and Rosewell and Mrs. Rosewell to come to SUPPER (*I'm* too old to change my coat or habits). Seven thirty on any evening that suits you, 105 E. Franklin Street. *Oriental Splendor* awaits you. Ever affly, G. M.

Page's idea of happiness was what some one, Robert Louis Stevenson perhaps, called

"communion with his friends." His father had ever been the most hospitable of men, having once, when some distant kinsfolk expressed a desire to come to "Oakland" on a certain day, and the question arose where they could be put to sleep, as the house was crowded, settled the matter by saying: "I never tell people not to come to see me; my wife and I can sleep in the 'other house.'" The "other house" was the office abovementioned, at that time unoccupied. This hospitable trait was dominant in the mind of his son, who was never happier than when he had at his table or at his fireside those whom he liked.

About his table men forgot the asperities of politics and warmed to each other as the friend of their gracious host. The Honorable Thomas Reed once suggested to him at dinner that he change his voting residence from Virginia to York, Maine, where he spent his summers, and turn Republican. "Then," he added, "I'll be glad to have you as a constituent." "I could not be a Republican, though I think a Maine Republican is as good as any," he replied humorously.

Among those from outside the State who came to "Oakland" were Dean Hodges, who

preached at the "Fork church." He had used the expression which Page used in the Preface to one of his books, "He who maps an undiscovered country may fix what boundaries he will"; the Littlefields, when Mr. Littlefield was in Richmond as Master Commissioner of the Supreme Court of the United States in the West Virginia Debt Settlement case; and Doctor Ewart, the English surgeon, who came to this country to receive the degree given him by one of the American universities.

At the time of the Jamestown Exposition, a gentleman from Peoria, Ill., whose forefathers had gone from St. Martin's Parish, was invited by Page's brother to come to Hanover "to see the Rice place" his forefathers had left two hundred years before, which adjoined the "Oakland" grant. On his way up on the midday train, he entered into conversation with a gentleman who got on at the junction of the Washington train with the one from Richmond. The gentleman was getting off at the same station and was also going to "Oakland." It was Thomas Nelson Page, and the meeting was the beginning of a friendship which since Mr. Rice's death has continued "from generation to generation," for his daughter and granddaughter were among

the first to call upon the author when he went to Denver to lecture as mentioned.

Rices still own the land, though there had been no known intercourse between them and the visitor's family since its representatives moved from the valley of Newfound River two centuries ago.

XV

HIS FRIENDSHIP FOR ROOSEVELT

On the wall at "Oakland" hangs a large photograph of President Roosevelt, with his autograph and inscription. Page one day told him there was a woman in Virginia who prayed for him every day. "I didn't know there was anybody in Virginia who cared whether I went to hell or not," he exclaimed with interest. "Who is it?" "My mother," replied the author. "Well, you give her this with my love," he said, pulling out a drawer and taking out a photograph of himself, on which he wrote: "To Mrs. John Page, with the regard and esteem of Theodore Roosevelt."

The President once asked what Page thought of some letter he had written to a gentleman upon a question of public interest. When told that the letter was thought very clever, he said, chuckling gleefully: "I think I have salted his hide and nailed it on the fence!" The author came to Richmond when the President spoke there, and also accompanied him to the University of Virginia at the time of his visit to that place.

Roosevelt's proclamation announcing the tercentennial of the Jamestown Exposition gave Page great satisfaction, for though it contained the historical fact known to most well-informed citizens of the United States, there was a disposition in some quarters to deny the facts, or else to overslaugh them. All of which was set at rest when Roosevelt proclaimed the fact that the Jamestown Exposition was in commemoration of the first permanent English settlement in America. He told Page that in travelling through the South and West, whenever he saw on the edge of the crowd three or four men holding a wild horse as the train slowed down, he always knew it was "his mount."

When the author wrote an article for a monthly magazine on the President, in which, after giving him credit for what he had done, he criticised him severely for certain of his public acts, his friends thought Mr. Roosevelt would be offended and have nothing more to do with him. In this they were mistaken, for the President, with the true spirit of a sportsman, when he next saw the writer said: "I read your article, and it's more than half true." That it made no breach between them was shown soon after the article appeared. A

delegation from Richmond went on to see the President, thinking they had an appointment with him; but, much to their chagrin, upon presenting themselves at the Executive Offices, they were met with the statement that the President was unexpectedly called away and would leave Washington in a couple of hours, and could not be seen.

The Richmond men, disappointed, met Page on Pennsylvania Avenue, who learned the facts of the case, and after telling them he would try to help them, went to a telephone in the barber-shop and called Mr. Loeb, the President's secretary. He explained the situation, and asked Mr. Loeb to say to Mr. Roosevelt that his friends were greatly disappointed, and that if he would consent to see them for five minutes, he would guaranty to have them there in ten minutes. In two minutes the message came that the President would see them, and upon their arrival he announced that he received them as the friends of Tom Page, and that there was no other man in Washington for whom he would have turned away senators and representatives, and received them.

Page had a high opinion of Roosevelt's literary work, and thought his "Winning of the

West" a valuable contribution to the history of our country.

After living for a time on Massachusetts Avenue, the Pages moved into their home, corner of R Street and New Hampshire Avenue, with its fine library and good pictures. Hither came relatives and friends in great number, and there they entertained extensively and hospitably. Some country neighbor found in the city would be seated at table by a Secretary, or Justice, or member of Congress, and would soon feel as much at ease as any one present. Once when the visitor came without a dress suit, he and the host were the only ones who did not wear them. Nor did it escape the observant eye of the country gentleman that at the table his host had on a different coat from that in which he had welcomed him when he arrived for dinner.

As the author worked with renewed energy at his writing, his wife took the deepest interest in what he was doing, and was one of his best critics. Her acquaintance with the literature of the day was of service to him, and her judgment of what was good was most sound. In his workshop on the third story of his home he was safe from the intrusion of many who would have wasted his working

hours but for his wife's care. She would meet his visitors with charming courtesy, and make appointments for him in the afternoon and evening, unless the matter was of such importance as to require immediate consideration.

It soon became known that the morning hours were his own, as that was the time when he said his mind was clearer and his energies more active. His custom was to write as soon as it was light enough for him to see. Then he would have a cup of coffee and work till breakfast. Sometimes that meal was served in his room.

After his wife's death he said he owed much to her, as she relieved him of many of the usual cares of the head of an establishment, and enabled him to devote his whole time to his work.

His correspondence was a very large one, from letters that came from people who wanted his autograph to those who wanted him to criticise their manuscripts and gain them the attention of the publishers who had done so much for him. He was punctilious in replying to letters. Once I remember he wrote telling the author of the bulky manuscript which he returned, that he did not know how many dukes she had seen, but that, for his part, he

was not sufficiently acquainted with them to be able to know how they would act and speak. Then he added: "I suggest that you write about the people you see around you and of things you know about."

Page never lost the love of the country, nor was happier than when he was riding over the plantation at "Oakland," or over the adjoining farms which he had acquired. There was no detail which he was not interested in, and he often surprised those about him at his intimate knowledge of the proceedings on the several places. In his copy of Horace he wrote in the back the reference to page 138, containing the "Invocation to Country Life." The passage which he marked is in the famous sixth satire of the Second Book, beginning:

"O rus, quando ego te aspiciam?"

In the summer the family usually went to York Harbor, Maine. There he formed many of the firm friendships of his life. The boatmen and fishermen were highly prized as friends, and he found satisfaction in tracing likenesses and names to his friends and neighbors in Virginia. York River and the Marshall House, Smith's Island and other good names of English stock interested him. In

his own naïve way he would assert the right of Virginia to the whole territory, as the "*Mayflower* compact" proved that the company were on their way to northern Virginia when they landed at Plymouth.

The Pages' reception at York Harbor, when they returned from Italy, was singularly striking. The whole place put on its gala attire and welcomed them with every mark of affection.

Twice after his mother reached her eightieth year he and his wife came and helped to nurse her through violent pneumonia. One night, when watching by her bedside, while she was unconscious, he heard her praying for him and others whom she loved. And at the time of her death, nearly ten years later, he and his wife watched with the rest of her family, whom she constantly recognized up to within half an hour of her departure—having told the doctor not to fill her up with drugs, as she wished to know what she was doing, as she knew she was dying. Such confidence accounted for the first clause in his will, in which he asserts his faith in Christ's words and life, as exemplified in the lives of those nearest to him in life.

XVI

HIS COLORED FRIENDS

Mention has been made of the influence of the family servants. The friendship between them and the son of their former owner continued without exception during their lives. He knew them and all their merits and shortcomings, and was ever ready to do them justice. In "Ole 'Stracted," Ephum's wife spoke with bitterness of one who "don' know nuttin' 'bout black folks, an' ain' nuver been fotch up wid 'em."

He ever felt that the negro should be treated with fairness by white people, and never failed to say that the whole race ought not to have to bear the odium of the vicious members. He was ever respectful of their rights, and sympathized with them in their troubles and difficulties, but he firmly believed that the happiness of both races depended on their not attempting to amalgamate or mix the blood of the African and Caucasian.

He used to quote with approval the statement of his friend John H. Smyth, who was

twice minister to Liberia, and was at the time of his death the president of the Negro Reformatory at "Broad Neck," an old Page estate in Hanover County, and whose face was as black as ebony: "I'm proud, Mr. Page, of being a genuine African. I can survive. The mulattoes and half-breeds must perish!" At the time of Smyth's appointment to be the head of the reformatory, there were upon the board some of the leading citizens of Virginia, who held him in high esteem.

Page never quite got away from the feeling of responsibility for the negro, nor yet perhaps from the feeling that to himself was due a certain measure of reciprocal regard. On his last visit to Richmond, a gentleman passing through the "Capitol Square" saw one stooping over and dropping some silver into the hat of an old colored man who was sitting at one of the gates of that beautiful park. He recognized the late ambassador to Italy, who said rather apologetically at having been detected in his "unwise act," according to modern theories of charity: "I have great sympathy for an old fellow like that, and I was just telling him so, and that the doctors said I would soon be blind like him." This was a reference to his fast-approaching "cataract."

From childhood Page had known the negro, as already stated. He had been at a sale in the neighborhood during the war, and seen a negro-trader bid over the limit of his mother's agent, who was there to buy the husband of a woman who had besought her aid in his behalf. "Tell your mother," said her friend, "I couldn't compete with the nigger-trader."

Just after the war he had taught in a colored Sunday-school opened by his cousin on land he owned at the time of his death, and in the absence of books and papers made letters in the sand for the colored children to learn the alphabet. He had often gone with his mother as a boy when she went to minister to the sick and suffering; he had seen their parties and weddings, their meetings and funerals, had written passes for those who wanted to go off visiting at night; had hunted and fished with them; and, indeed, had known them as thoroughly as if he had been a scientist studying any subject in which he might be interested.

He had heard the awful things that brought bad luck, such as a rooster's crowing at sundown, bringing an axe in the house on your shoulder, raising an umbrella in the house, having a black cat run across your path, com-

ing into a house by one door and not going out by the same door, and a hundred other curious ideas that the plantation had when he was in his most impressionable age. So that when he began to write of the negro he was in the frame of mind which Izaak Walton declared to be the proper one for a fisherman, to "treat your frog as if you loved him."

He once assembled a host of little blacks at "Oakland" and got the growing cockle out of the wheat, a feature in the farm life of the country absolutely unique in my experience. As they swept across the wheat-field in the early spring, and with sharp "spuds" dug up the pestiferous growth which was either the result of foul seed or filthy land, there was the natural comparison with the parable in the Bible of "the Wheat and the Tares."

On his last visit to "Oakland" he lent an old colored friend the money to pay for a kitchen range; and his wife once said that the expression used by an old colored man in Washington, "*that he wished to have a seat in Virginia*" (an expression often used in the old records), had cost her husband several hundred dollars. He replied that of all the applications he had had made to him to borrow money, few had ever appealed more to his imagination.

"Charlotte" lived for years on his land, and was the constant object of his solicitude. She dwelt there free of rent, and was the monthly recipient of his bounty. Once when he chided her for keeping an old dog who was very worthless, as he thought, and a source of cost to her, as a tax had to be paid on him, she replied spiritedly: "Dat dawg! Why, dat dawg is mo' comfort to me dan Cæsar was!" (Cæsar was her husband.) When his mother once took Charlotte to task for having taken the family off to an all-day big meeting, and left Cæsar in bed, with nobody to wait on him, she replied with triumph: "Why, mistis, yo' got to trus' Gord some!"

After she was eighty, Charlotte went to New York, her first trip, and brought home a great-granddaughter who had been stricken with consumption while at work there. To her home the Bishop of Virginia went while on a visitation to the parish, and baptized and confirmed the ill girl. It was only when Charlotte realized that the girl was too ill to be immersed that she consented to her baptism by the "pouring on of water."

The ambassador and his wife while in Italy were a constant source of solicitude to her. When there had been read to her a letter giv-

ing an account of a dinner at which the Pages had dined with the King and Queen of Italy, Charlotte sent him word that "while he's setting by the earthly king, not to forget the heavenly one." The message was related to the King by the recipient of it.

When at "Oakland" in 1916, the only time that the Pages were back in this country during their six years of service in Italy, Charlotte's visit was a memorable one. Together they sat on the back porch at "Oakland" and discussed the affairs of the world. She had a vivid faith that God would end the war and take care of them. Her statement was that "Germany had got so big and heavy that it had got the world on a slant; and that the rest of the world had to join in to push the Germans back, so that the earth could get level again."

When she started home, a mile away, he said he would drive with her, and there has rarely been seen a more interesting pair—the ambassador driving the old woman, ninety-six years old, in an old buggy that looked quite antiquated. She survived his return and died in her hundredth year, praying the richest blessings on his head. "I love dat man, jes' like he was black," she once said. In the col-

ored people's graveyard on the hill at "Oakland" she was buried with the service read by Page's brother, amid a great concourse of friends, white and black.

"Hannah, the faithful," and her family have lived on the corner of the "Oakland" plantation, ever since the war, and for thirty years of that period free of rent. Once when a member of the connection returned after several years' absence, the old woman said: "Yo' ain' been hyar for five years; but I jest wan' tell you, I ain' miss nare day sence yo' been gone, 'cept de one Sunday Bro Jasper preach in de summer at Union Chuch."

Union Church was the great summer preaching place for colored people, six miles from "Oakland," and the Reverend John Jasper, who had been a client of Page's, was the great colored preacher from Richmond, who came thither yearly to preach to the thousand or more who flocked thither from all the neighboring counties to hear the wonderfully eloquent and powerful old man preach his famous sermon on the text "The Lord is a Man of War." It was the sermon in which he argued for the Ptolemaic system, and proved to his own satisfaction and to that of many of his hearers that "de sun do move." He was,

without doubt, one of the most eloquent of men.

When "Meh Lady" appeared, the author's mother told Hannah that "Mr. Tom" had put her in a book, and that people were reading and talking about her. She said: "He mus' have mighty little to do to be puttin' me in a book!" For years she walked from her home—a distance of more than a mile—to make the fires in winter, and in spring and summer to minister to the needs of the household, often bringing for any child in the house a flower gathered on the way. When she became too feeble to come, the lady of the house often visited her, and when the author's brother was married, such of the wedding presents as could be transported were taken in the carriage for the venerable servant to see. And the bridal couple stopped and went in to see her on the start of their wedding journey.

The morning she died a marvellous thing happened, so her husband said. She told him to open the door, that "Miss Betsey," as she called the author's mother, was there. He told her "Miss Betsey" could not get there that time of the morning; but she would not be comforted until, to humor her, he went to the door and opened it, and said: "Come in,

Miss Betsey!" And the faithful soul passed to its Maker, reciting to the imagined presence of her former mistress, who had ever been to her the ideal of goodness, the Lord's Prayer, which she had been taught in her childhood.

Another pensioner who survived the author and was among his lifelong friends was "Sally." She learned under "Aunt Betty," the most wonderful of cooks, and was her worthy successor at "Oakland." She lives a mile away on her own land. It was she that went with Page's mother in the winter of 1861–62 to the artillery winter-headquarters near Centreville, when Mrs. Page and Mrs. Pendleton went to the camp to visit their husbands. Sally, at the time of the author's death, was eighty-six, and when one of the "Oakland" young people asked her if she had been baptized, she replied spiritedly: "Hi, Miss Betsey my godmother."

"Uncle Balla," already mentioned in this memoir as the hero of the Page boys, is still memorialized at "Oakland," and in the nurseries of those who have gone from "Oakland" and have nurseries, in the fetching song sung to the baby, who can hardly resist the influence of the slumber song:

"Come! Uncle Balla!
Bring up the carriage!
And take this baby
To r-i-i-de!"

In the third line the baby's name was often substituted for "this baby" in the many repetitions made by loving mother or nurse.

Uncle Balla not only taught the young people to ride, as already mentioned, but it was the height of an "Oakland" boy's ambition to be allowed to ride beside him on the box of the carriage. Next to riding at his side was the privilege of riding behind on the "trunk seat," and holding on by the straps which hung from the upper corners of the rear of the carriage.

In Page's youth the term coach had passed out and "the carriage" and "carriage driver" were the terms used. Once the old fellow paid the author's mother a gruesome but very expressive compliment, when she had been very quiet and reassuring to some ladies who had been much alarmed when the horses became frightened. She told them not to be afraid, that they had a good driver. This he heard, and as they bade him good night, upon arriving safely at home, he said to his mistress: "I declar', Miss Betsey, I jus' as live drive you as a corpse!"

"Ralph" has already been mentioned as the faithful attendant of Page's father during the war, and as having returned to "Oakland" after the war. He lived there several years, and then went to Petersburg and married a young woman whom he had met during the time that the artillery headquarters were there between June 20, 1864, and April 2, 1865. When Ralph was a very old man, Page's brother sent him the money to come to see his sister Sally, who, as mentioned, lived near "Oakland." He came and enjoyed himself greatly. The noticeable thing about him was that he had skipped one generation, and walked and talked with Page's nephews as though they were of the author's own generation—the fact being that the nephews were of the age of those whom he had seen there after the war, when he left "Oakland," as already mentioned.

To show that Thomas Nelson Page's colored friends were not limited to the locality in which he grew up, the following incident may be mentioned. A colored driver at York Harbor, Maine, whose employer was being waited for in front of the Page summer home, was asked if he could leave his horses to come in out of a passing shower. When he said he

could not leave them, an umbrella was brought out of the house, raised, and handed him by the questioner. After the rain, as he drove off, he turned and said to the lady in the carriage: "Madam, that's the greatest gentleman in this place!"

Since his death letters have been received from many colored friends of his and his family. One of them came from her who, he said, had given the name to "The Two Little Confederates." He remembered her voice calling his two little cousins and playfellows, "Oh, Frank and Willie!" and breathing out threatenings, if not slaughter, of what would be done to them if she reported them to "Miss Jane," as she would "if they didn't come there, torectly!" The two boys, or three, when the future author was present, were then hiding from her all the time, as she followed them off in the fields, half a mile from the "Mont Air" house.

XVII

HIS DEMOCRACY, AND APPOINTMENT AS AMBASSADOR BY WILSON

From a child Thomas Nelson Page had taken an interest in politics, and he ever continued interested in whatever concerned his State and country. The question raised by the Reconstruction period in the South held the white people in leash. His father had been an "old-line-Whig," follower of Henry Clay, the term "old-line" being well understood in the forties of the nineteenth century, while his uncle William had been an equally violent Andrew Jackson Democrat, or "locofoco," as Page's father, who sat across the fireplace at "Oakland," used to call him when in an argumentative frame of mind.

"Why, sirs," he would say, as he laid his book down and addressed his sons, "your uncle William there used to belong to that 'locofoco party,' which believed that whatever Andrew Jackson did was right! They broke Mr. Clay down, the greatest man the country ever had, who kept us out of war as

long as he lived, and if they had but let him alone, he would have saved the country and prevented our war. Now look at us! See what locofocoism has brought us to!"

"Nonsense, John!" would be the reply of the other man. "You talk about bringing on the war; why, you went into the army a week before I did!" "Oh, well!" Page's father would say, "of course, after you locofocos brought the war on, everybody had to go!" Then the younger man would resume his reading, but with an ear open, and every now and then making some prodding remark, which was always countered by the old Jackson Democrat.

After the war the exigencies of the situation compelled the white people to stand together against unfettered ignorance, and Thomas Nelson Page's views, tinged by those conditions, were rather with his uncle than with his father, though he ever had that admiration for Mr. Clay which has been already mentioned. Shortly before his death, as he drove along the county road near Richmond, he pointed out the porch of a little store, from which he said he and two distinguished Virginians had once made Democratic speeches. Then he told of his experience one dreadfully rainy night,

when he had gone down to a country store kept by a friend to make a political speech, and there were present but half a dozen people. He had begun to speak upon the Constitution and against the protective tariff when the storekeeper, who had listened intently, called out: "Stop, stop, you're wasting a good speech. We'd rather you'd talk than speak!" So he stopped speaking, and they all talked till the storm abated and the time came to close the store.

He took great interest in the election of his distinguished kinsman General Williams Carter Wickham, of "Hickory Hill," to the State Senate, when the control of General Mahone, who had ridden the commonwealth a wild race, was overthrown.

When his brother became a candidate before the General Assembly for one of the State offices, Page came to Richmond to help him. Whoever met him was charmed by his personality, and no candidate ever had a more loyal or efficient supporter. "I hope, sir," he would say, in meeting some member of the General Assembly, "my brother may have your influence and support"; or, "I shall be pleased to speak with you of my brother's candidacy."

"I never knew Tom Page was a politician,"

was said by his friends, who hardly knew that on the court green in his native county he could call the names of nearly every man present, after he had been attending the court a few years.

When, in 1913, the Virginia senators proposed the name of Thomas Nelson Page to President Wilson for an ambassadorship, there was some slight opposition in Virginia. The attention of the secretary of state was called to the fact that in the presidential election, when he was a candidate, he had not been voted for by Page. "I had already told him so," was Page's reply when apprised of the fact. For Woodrow Wilson the author had a great respect. His brother had sat next the future President at the university, in the law class of 1880–81, and they had watched the career of the Virginian-born candidate for the presidency with much interest. Mr. Wilson had been entertained at the Page home in Washington when he came there to make an address; and to the Baltimore convention the author had gone, though not a delegate, and used his best efforts in favor of Mr. Wilson's nomination.

When the President was inaugurated, Page was chairman of the reception committee, and

an account of the "Page house-party" on that occasion has been charmingly given by Armistead C. Gordon. When it became known that Page would accept an ambassadorship, his friends all over the country, headed by the resolutions of the University of Virginia, rallied to his support, and the President, after saying, "What's the use of their writing to tell me about Tom Page, as if I didn't know him," offered him the mission to Italy. This was before war was declared, though Europe was in a state of ferment.

Page's admiration for the Italians and for the house of Savoy was of long standing, and his knowledge of Roman history and Roman literature was accurate and circumstantial. In New York, in front of one of the great theatres, years ago, as the writer waited for his wife in the lobby, a little newsboy ran up and offered him a paper. The man at the door spoke roughly to the child, calling him, as he drove him out, a little "Dago," and adding, for the benefit of the gentleman standing there, that they were "a worthless lot," and using other disrespectful language.

"Are you not speaking thoughtlessly?" asked the gentleman quietly.

"No. What have they ever done?"

"Many things. They have enlightened the world, and produced some of its greatest men. Julius Cæsar was an *Italian*."

"That was a long time ago," replied the official.

"Christopher Columbus was an *Italian*."

"A long time ago."

"Napoleon Bonaparte was an *Italian*."

"That was a long time ago."

"Marconi is an *Italian*."

"You have *got* me!" was the honest reply of the big fellow. Then he added: "You seem to know a lot about 'em, though you don't look like 'em."

"No; I'm only an American, who doesn't speak roughly to a child," he said, as he joined his wife and passed into the theatre.

Just before leaving America the author presented his brother with Chapman's translation of Homer, the same which Keats sat up all night to read, and was the occasion of the glorious sonnet beginning:

"Much have I travelled in the realms of gold."

In which volume is written:

Rosewell Page, from his brother, Thomas Nelson Page on his departure for Rome Augt 31, 1913, with

his love. Dear Rosewell: You are the classical scholar of the family, and here is the best reproduction of that which Alexander thought worthy to place in the jewel casket of Darius, and keep under his pillow. Tom.

XVIII

HIS LIFE IN ROME

When Thomas Nelson Page went with his wife to Rome as ambassador to Italy, that country, like other countries, was in a state of excitement over the affairs of Europe. Italy had grown great and prosperous under the wise leadership of her sensible King and his great advisers, and was fortunate in the noble Queen, whose relationship to one of the smaller states was a useful factor in the solution of the problem.

The arrival of the Pages was a very simple affair. They came to represent a great republic at the court of the most democratic ruler in Europe. The royal couple soon became very friendly with the Americans, who had nothing in view but the proper representation of their country to the best of their ability. The ambassador was welcomed to the country residence of the King of Italy in a royal coach which had been sent for him, though the meeting was very informal. The King came forward and greeted him in a cordial manner,

welcoming him in well-chosen English. At the luncheon the conversation was very friendly and unrestrained, except that some of those present did not speak English, and the ambassador, though a hard student of Italian and a good Latin scholar, would not then trust himself to use the beautiful language of the country, in which he later became quite fluent. "We are farmers out here," said the King pleasantly, "and we do not dress this way all the time. To-day I am dressed to meet the ambassador from the United States." To this the ambassador replied: "I'm a farmer myself in Virginia. I hope you do not think I dress this way all the time. I've only put these clothes on to meet the King of Italy." And so the time passed pleasantly, the host and his guest each making the acquaintance which was to become a genuine friendship, of which the most recent evidence was the telegram sent by His Majesty expressing his lively sympathy with those who were in distress at his friend's death.

The wife of the ambassador was soon given a royal welcome, and they each received from that time until Page resigned, after the war was ended, every kindness and attention, which was emphasized at the leave-taking,

when the Queen with emotion, at parting, embraced the American lady whom she had come to know and love in the six years of her residence in Italy.

Though Thomas Nelson Page came to Italy as a stranger in diplomacy and almost a stranger to modern Rome, his association and experience with public men and affairs at home gave him, along with the spirit which he inherited and the pride in the country he represented, that confidence which enabled him to meet any of the experts who figured upon the diplomatic stage.

As Baron Sonnino, the great Italian statesman, read President Wilson's paper on the world's peace, having asked to be allowed to read it himself rather than have the ambassador read it, as directed by his government in Washington, he paused, and was asked what he thought of it. "It's very high!" he replied. "Dante had the same idea." Then the Italian remarked that he had once written a paper, himself, on Dante's idea. He did not know whether the world was yet ready for such an event.

When the Italian representatives returned from Paris, having rejected the proposals deemed by them unsatisfactory, and the

French from the legation in Rome went down to welcome them upon their return, as if in sympathy with them, the ambassador from the United States called attention to the fact that at Paris the French representatives at the peace table stood exactly where the United States stood.

When the Wilson ideas became unpopular, and a file of soldiers entered the palace yard of the Embassy of the United States, as the government intimated to prevent any untoward act from happening, the ambassador took steps to have them immediately removed, and said that when he had to be protected by armed soldiers he would ask for his recall. That afternoon he walked over Rome until very late in the evening, and never received aught but kindness.

In Richmond, on his return, when he spoke he said that he and his family had always received the greatest courtesy, and that he had never known any American during his stay in Italy to have received any bad treatment at the hands of the Italians. It took half a year's salary to pay the rent of the palace, and when the war came the price of flour and coke was enormous. There was no whimpering about it, however, and it was the pride of the ambas-

sador that, in all the trials which beset his countrymen after the war began, and so many Americans had to get home by way of Italy, he had never heard a man growl or a woman whine.

Once, when one of his countrywomen came into the embassy and demanded to see the ambassador, after having called in his absence and gone away till she could see him personally, he greeted her, to her surprise, at the door, and invited her back to the office in which he worked.

'I've come to see the ambassador!" she asserted vigorously.

"You see him, madam."

"You the ambassador?" she asked incredulously of the quiet gentleman.

"Yes, madam."

"I've come to see you about getting me home to New York!" she asserted.

"I'm ready to help you, and provision has been made for you and others. Have you seen the ship?"

"Yes."

"Is it safe?"

"Yes, I suppose so!"

"Is it clean?"

"Yes, but 'tis not comfortable enough for

me to go home on. My husband will pay any amount to have me made comfortable on my way home. Indeed, I have money to pay for it myself." And she seemed irreconcilable.

Then he told of the great number of Americans who had to be gotten home, and of the provision made for their safe going, and how the consulates had been organized for the purpose; but as she appeared quite unmoved from her purpose to be sent home comfortably, he said: "Madam, let me tell you a story: The night before Christmas my brother's wife, at our old home in Virginia, went up on the hill and asked our manager's daughter if 'Santa Claus' was coming to see her that night. She said she hoped so. 'And what do you want Santa Claus to bring you?' she asked. 'A hat,' answered the little girl. 'What kind of a hat?' 'Any kind I can git!' she said."

Then he rose and went to the door with her, and the lady told it in Rome that her ambassador had argued her out of her position by telling her a story from Virginia.

The nearest approach to a man's "growling" was when there came to the embassy a man who demanded that he be given the money to come home on, or at least to go farther on his way and then return. To the am-

bassador's reply that provision had been made for people to return home directly, but none such as he proposed, he said insolently: "D—n a country that does like that!" In an instant the ambassador was upon his feet, and opened the door and said, in a voice that carried conviction: "If you don't get out of this embassy, I'll have you flung out in two seconds! And you'll never get back to that country which you say is yours, if I can help it; for I no more believe you are an American than I believe you ought to be one!"

In Rome the Pages had for a loving friend the eminent sculptor Sir Moses Ezekiel, whose work had gained him recognition throughout Europe. He was a Richmond boy, and had been a member of the gallant cadet corps of the Virginia Military Institute, which won lasting fame at the battle of Newmarket by acting as if on dress parade while they were being cut down by Federal bullets. In the Page home in Washington is the beautiful model in bronze of Ezekiel's "Jefferson," which stands at the University of Virginia, presented by the sculptor to the author years ago.

When the Pages arrived in Rome, the gallant sculptor was among the first to greet them, and from that time till the day of his

death he was ever a welcome guest. When Ezekiel came to America on a visit to his family and to a sister living in Richmond, while Page was ambassador, he came to "Oakland," and there have rarely been there more welcome guests than he and the little Italian girl who came with him. "How do you modern artists feel when you consider the greatness of the ancient masters?" asked Page's brother at the breakfast-table. "Do you feel that you are hopeless in ever attaining to their perfection?" "That is not our matter," he answered promptly. "Our work is the fruitage of our time, as theirs was of their time. You don't stop making corn or wheat, and despair because 'Oakland' made more in old times than it does now, do you?" he answered sweetly and philosophically.

Page's interest in his work was highly appreciated by the sculptor, and several pieces of his best work, "Homer Reciting the Iliad" and "Jefferson," at the university as mentioned, "Stonewall Jackson," at the Virginia Military Institute, and, above all, his "Memorial of the Southern Confederacy," at Arlington, were all secured for their respective positions by the efforts of his friends, among whom he ever counted the Pages.

XIX

HIS RETURN TO AMERICA IN 1916

Only once during the six years' service in Italy did Thomas Nelson Page and his wife return to America. This was in 1916. The coming was a sad one, the occasion being the extreme illness of Mrs. Page's two devoted brothers—one in California and one in Chicago. Few families have ever been more devoted. Her two brothers were men of large affairs and large minds—Bryan Lathrop, Esq., of Chicago, well known in the business and art world of that great city, and Barbour Lathrop, Esq., whose services have been commemorated by a medal struck by the Smithsonian Institution. The ambassador and his wife arrived in time to see the former in his last days, and were fortunate in having the latter restored to health after a very serious illness.

When the ambassador came to Richmond his reception was most gratifying. He delivered a notable address at the University of Richmond, which was received with much sat-

isfaction by all who heard it. Wherever he went he spoke of Italy and the Italians in the most appreciative and affectionate way. He said he often stopped, in driving through the country, and talked with the workers in the fields, whom he ever found courteous and civil when they found themselves talking to an American. Many of them had relatives in this country, and many of the younger ones looked forward to coming to the *Stati Uniti* some time or other.

Whole families would be working together, and, in spite of the absence of the men at the front, he would hear "the snatch" of a song, or a merry laugh, as if the family burden was lightened when borne by so many. A great admirer of beauty, he often referred to the beautiful women and children among the Italian people. Of them he commented that they had the same gentleness of manner as the people of eastern Virginia among whom he had grown up.

It was a wonder to him and a regret that more of the Italians did not come to the Southern farms in this country, the obvious answer being that the public works of the country, which ever sought their sturdy work, were a more profitable venture for those who had just

landed than the agricultural prospect. Then, too, he realized that the negro labor of the South also acted as a motive for the Italians' going West and North.

The ambassador once wrote from Rome of his meeting with Sir George Otto Trevelyan, the nephew and biographer of Macaulay. An elderly gentleman came to the embassy and asked to see a member of the staff who happened to be absent at the time. The ambassador asked if a message might be left for the gentleman, who would regret missing the call. The stranger asked that he might be told that Mr. Trevelyan called to pay his respects, and regretted not seeing him to thank him for a courtesy extended him. "Are you Sir George Trevelyan?" asked the ambassador. "Yes," answered the visitor. "Then you are Macaulay's nephew?" This was admitted, and the ambassador introduced himself, and the two became firm friends. Together they walked about Rome and visited the places of historic interest. From the scholarly Englishman Page learned of the points which Macaulay had known and used in "The Lays of Ancient Rome."

XX

HIS LOVE OF ITALY, AND HIS EFFORTS TO MAKE ITALY'S WORK KNOWN

When the war came, and all Italy was in the agony of that great struggle, the wife of the United States ambassador opened in their palace a workroom, or "ouvroir," as it was called, to which the ladies of Rome repaired to work for the relief of the wounded soldiers and their families. This was no new sight for the ambassador, who during the Civil War had often seen the women of his home making lint and bandages from the old linen sheets and tablecloths for Confederate soldiers.

From friends in America, and from her own private purse, large contributions of materials and supplies were provided by the wife of the ambassador. The value of this work and the high estimation in which it was held by the Italians is well evidenced. Appreciation of it was shown by many expressions of those who represented the beneficiaries of the undertaking. What was thus done, and what was

done by the Red Cross in large measure, was for a long time the strongest evidence the Italians had of America's sympathy for Italy in her struggle. For, though the United States had only one regiment in Italy, her assistance could not be properly measured in terms of men, for what Italy needed most were supplies and money, both of which were furnished as her needs were made known.

Nor has there ever been any question as to the efforts made by the ambassador to let her wants be made known, and to have those wants supplied. Her needs and sufferings, her resolution and her sacrifices, were kept before the American Government, and when the President went to Europe, and some doubt was expressed as to his being able to come to Italy, Page's knowledge of the situation and his personal efforts contributed to Mr. Wilson's visit of the 1st of January, 1919. That visit, so fraught with importance, made him for a time the hero of Italy. How his popularity waned is not for discussion here. They who read Page's "Italy and the World War" will find the question discussed with the impartiality of an anatomist dissecting the subject before him. Therein is told at first hand the facts as they then existed and had existed

since the author arrived as the representative of his country.

When the ambassador went to Paris to give the President and his advisers the benefit of his knowledge and experience, he was of the opinion that too much had been yielded to the Jugo-Slavs, many of whom had laid down their arms after Austria had been defeated, and who in his opinion were about to receive the fruits of victory which Italy had won.

There is no better account of the defeat at Caporetto, and the recovery and victory on the Piave a year later to a day, than that found in Page's book just mentioned. There the fact is made known that Italy and the Italians fixed and held the line of the Piave against the apprehension of the great Foch and the opinion of the able English General Robertson that it would be necessary to give up that line.

"While the King was at the front," Page wrote, "self-effaced, so far as public participation in the command of operations was concerned, yet felt by all Italy, military and civic, to be on the spot where his presence counted most, the Queen was with equal quietness, yet with equal effectiveness, heading the work

which war always, and this war especially, imposed on women. . . . She placed the great Quirinal Palace in the hands of competent experts, and transformed it into a hospital complete in its equipment, and up to date in every respect. The work was done under her personal supervision. The former palace of the Popes and the present palace of the King of Italy was filled with Italian wounded—private soldiers—under the personal superintendence of her Majesty, the Queen herself. The Quirinal Palace was the first hospital conducted by her, and was so conducted until the end of the war." To the Duchess d'Aosta, who became head of the Italian Red Cross, he gives due credit, saying that "in the war zone, wherever duty called, she gave herself in full measure to the great cause." To General Cadorno and General Vittorio Zupelli he gives credit for unobtrusive, complete, and successful organization of the Italian army, which upon Italy's entering the war was stretched along the extended Italian border and forced the fighting along eight hundred kilometres of front. He also gives credit to the Italian fleet, which, under the command of the Duke of the Abruzzi, bottled up the Austrian fleet at Pola, and was of the efficient transport service in

bringing off from Durazzo the important remnant of the shattered Serbian army, with their large body of prisoners, who had made their way across Albania to the sea.

In the summer of 1917 the Pages went for a rest to the north of Scotland. In the back of a volume of Matthew Arnold's poems there is written by the ambassador:

Read as "a forgetfulness of evils and a truce from cares," St. Germains, Longniddry, Scotld., August 1917.

XXI

HIS RESIGNATION AND RETURN TO AMERICA

The six years of arduous work in Italy had made the ambassador and his wife, after the war was over, long for the return home. So when President Wilson was in Rome in the beginning of 1919, Page told him of his desire, and said that as soon as the condition of the public service would permit he would resign. The President recognized the force of the ambassador's position and consented to his retirement.

The departure of the Pages from Rome was, as their arrival, without ostentation or incident, except for the kindly expression of many of the Italians who had come to know and love them. Of course there were the usual formalities of taking leave of the diplomatic corps and of the royal personages already mentioned.

School-children let out of school never rejoiced more sincerely in their release than did the ambassador and his wife at getting home.

The war was ended, and their sojourn in Italy was a happy memory, their friendships there tried and secure. Their homecoming was indeed an event. They came via England, where they were joined by their daughter. When they arrived in New York, they were met by members of their family and a few friends. The greeting was glowing and delightful.

When Page came South, his arrival in Richmond was made an event. He was invited to speak in the hall of the House of Delegates, in the Capitol, which was crowded to its capacity by those who came to do honor to their representative, who had shed lustre on a great position, though principally to welcome a personal friend. He was introduced by Doctor Douglas Freeman, editor of *The News-Leader*, in a striking way, who, after reviewing the record of distinguished Virginians who had represented the country abroad, asserted that no one of them had filled his position under as trying conditions, or had displayed greater dignity or greater ability in the service of his country. Page's speech was full of sentiment and appreciation at being back among those whom he loved. He gave some of his experiences. He told of having been in the House of

Commons when Lloyd George, as he laid the peace terms on the table, had said: "We've won; but my God! how near we were to losing!" Then he spoke of Italy and of what he knew of his own knowledge of her suffering and self-sacrifice, dealing tenderly and affectionately with the people among whom he had spent the previous years. He told of how they had striven and how they had suffered, and how they had been misunderstood, if not maligned. He referred to the great length of the Italian line which had been held, and gave the details of the break and overflow through the lines at Caporetto, and how Italy, girding herself, had one year later redeemed the reproach of that disaster and given the blood of her best for that redemption.

The effect of this address upon the audience was electrical. It was delivered so naturally, so simply, that as one listened it seemed as if the speaker were relating the details of a great family record to those deeply interested but in the main uninformed as to what it contained.

As he concluded his address, and said he should not rest until the people of America were informed of the facts as to what the people of Italy had endured and suffered, there was scarcely a person present who failed to

realize that in the quiet gentleman who was speaking there were combined the courage and the knowledge and the ability to do what he promised. When the audience rose, there has rarely been such an ovation to any citizen who was speaking solely of a country and a people of different nationality and a different tongue.

In token of appreciation, the great order of St. Maurice and St. Lazarus was bestowed upon the orator, whom they who presented it justly called the friend of Italy, as did afterward the Premier and great leader Mussolini, who described him as one who, while serving his own country faithfully, was ever the friend of Italy and her people. At a dinner at which he was present in an adjoining State, as the ex-ambassador passed a gentleman in the dining-room, he was asked: "How is Italy?" "Well," he answered, "Fascisti!" "Their passion is the love for Italy!" he told me, and when asked for the origin of the term, replied: "The 'fasces' of the lictors, which implied union. The fasces was the bundle of rods, the emblem of the old Roman Government, which you may now see in the posts of the iron fence surrounding the Capitol Square in Richmond."

XXII

HIS "ITALY AND THE WORLD WAR"

The winter of 1919–20 was spent by the Pages in California. They were most of the time at Santa Barbara, where they greatly enjoyed the climate and the beautiful country. What pleased them especially, however, was that it was a place where he could work on his book on Italy.

A writer in *The Forum* has called attention to the fact that Thomas Nelson Page was the only representative of the government to one of the great powers engaged in the World War who has written no account of the political transaction taking place in the country to which he was accredited, and refers to the fact that he knew that he had kept an accurate diary of all that went on while he was ambassador to Italy. Although it was the intention of the author to have published an autobiography, he thought the books he published, the one historical and the other literary, the work which should be first done. When comment was made that his "Italy and the World

War" was not as light a book as one of the critics would have wished, who would have preferred a book dealing with the chit-chat of the court and fashionable society of Rome, the author said, after deliberating for a moment: "It's the best I could do. It states facts which should be known, and if I had it to do over, I would write it as it is!" Nor was this "*scripsi quod scripsi*" attitude one of obstinate self-satisfaction. It was the result of his deliberate purpose to tell the world of Italy and her World War experience. How well that has been done, they who read the book may judge for themselves. They must be struck by the author's knowledge of the past history of the country he wrote of, and of his intimate knowledge of what took place while he held the post of ambassador of the United States.

Though across the continent from the rest of his family, they were ever in his mind. From Santa Barbara he sent a substantial check to be divided between the two girls of his brother's family, adding: "I shall have pleasure in thinking that at Easter they will wear something for me. Tell them this is part of their wages for the work they have done at 'Little Oakland.'" "Little Oakland" was the home in Richmond where the winter

months were spent by the "Oakland" family, and the reference to the girls' work was to their assistance in making the town house comfortable. At another time he hoped his remittance would be received in time for an Easter bonnet.

He loved to recall the story of his father when, as a little boy, he was going to school at Bishop Meade's, in Frederick County. He had been sent on horseback by the bishop's wife, his cousin Thomasia, to bring her bonnet from the milliner's, in the village of Millwood, three miles from "Mountain View," and had persuaded the milliner, as a last resort, when the horse would not allow the bandbox to be taken on his back, to allow him to wear the bonnet home. What a scene, thought the author, that must have been: the child galloping along "the Pike," with the bonnet ribbons flying, arriving and delivering safely the precious headgear to the dear lady of the house, who kissed him, all bonneted, and welcomed him with open arms and surprised laughter, declaring him "a darling boy!"

Upon his return from Santa Barbara in the spring of 1920, Page wrote his brother to send him what he could find about the Phi Beta

Kappa Society, and the foundation of the parent chapter at William and Mary College, as he had engaged to deliver the literary address at Harvard before the Phi Beta Kappa Chapter there. His ancestor John Page had been one of the founders of the famous society at William and Mary College in 1776, which has stood ever since all over the country for scholarship and good learning. The address was duly prepared and delivered.

While the Pages were in the full enjoyment of their well-earned holiday, there came the news, late in October, of the extreme illness of their daughter in England. So on four days' notice they set out on the *Aquitania* for England. On the 29th of October, 1920, from New York, he writes:

> We have no cable to-day. Our friend Collins [Doctor Collins had been in Italy with the Red Cross, and there gained the confidence and affection of the writer and his wife] says this is favorable under the circumstances. I can only pray it may prove so.
>
> It looks here as though everything were for Harding and C——. The Democrats have thrown away their chances. They should have organized, and they should have stood by Mr. Wilson and the League. Men are beginning now to realize it. I pray God you may all keep well while we are away. My dear love to you all.
>
> Your devoted brother
>
> Tom.

To their infinite delight, the wireless gave them the news of their daughter being out of danger. When she was convalescent, they took their departure for the Riviera, spending much of the winter at Monte Carlo, where he worked steadily, and where they were later joined by their daughter. Before going as ambassador to Italy, the author of "Red Rock" had in mind a novel which was to deal with the same period, and might be deemed a sequel thereto, though it was not to be so called. And so in the latter part of May, 1921, he made a visit to South Carolina with his brother, whom he urged to go with him, that he might refresh his memory as to the scenes and incidents of the Hampton "Red Shirt Campaign," which was to be the climax of the book he was writing.

Columbia and Charleston were visited, and several days spent in seeing the various places of interest. He was fortunate in meeting and conversing with the intimate friends of General Hampton, and in one case with one of the "Hampton managers" in the famous campaign.

In Columbia, when the author went to call upon the governor, he was notified by the secretary of state that, upon hearing of his

presence in the State House, the Court of Appeals had adjourned, and would call upon him. This they did, clad in their judicial robes, and headed by Chief Justice Gary. He made haste to assure them that it was the greatest compliment ever paid him, and that he felt in no wise worthy of such an unusual honor. Governor and Mrs. Cooper entertained him and his brother at dinner, as did ex-Senator Benet, while many other distinguished citizens showed him every mark of respect and consideration, among them being ex-Governor and Mrs. Manning, the latter of whom he had known as one of the brilliant women of Richmond in her girlhood. His visit to Columbia was most successful, and he returned with the data he sought, which had been so generously supplied by the leading men of the place, among whom may be named, in addition to those mentioned, Messrs. William Banks Dove, Secretary of State Gibbs, Fitzhugh McMaster, W. W. Ball, McSwain, Mr. and Mrs. Siebals, Mr. and Mrs. Melton, and Captain Starling. The whole city, indeed, showed him every courtesy. Into one of the schools he was brought, where he received a warm greeting and spoke a few minutes, expressing his appreciation of being allowed to see the school

and of his faith in the education of all the people. In Charleston he was welcomed by friends, among whom was Major Barnwell, who was able to give much interesting information upon the matter in which the author was so much interested. The Pinckneys and Stoneys were all hospitable, and with the latter he went out into the country and saw one of the old places so full of historical association. Upon leaving South Carolina he came to "Oakland," and after a day or two spent there attended the centennial of the University of Virginia. There he was the recipient of many distinguished courtesies, and met a host of friends from all over the country.

Short was this period of his happiness, however, for upon his reaching his daughter's home in Southboro, Mass., the following week, he found his wife in a dying condition. She had borne the vicissitudes of the Italian struggle for six years, and had been so shaken by a slight operation performed at home, even without her husband's knowledge, as to have a fatal termination. Heartbroken, he gathered himself together and determined to live for those whom she and he loved. Though his family noted that he was so sorely stricken, he would not let his grief interfere with the

happiness of others, and ever insisted that the children should not be curtailed of their pleasure and happiness because of his sorrow and suffering. He tried to bear up, and in the autumn began to play golf again, much to the delight of his family and friends. He said to his devoted friend the Honorable John Cadwalader, of Philadelphia, that he could not get back his lost stroke.

In October, 1921, he was asked to come to Colorado and deliver three lectures on Dante before the school-teachers of that great State. He said he could not then deliver three lectures, and it was agreed that he should deliver his lecture in three different cities. Accordingly, with his brother he went that fall and delivered his Dante lectures in Denver, Grand Junction, and Pueblo. In all of the cities there were great audiences, and at Denver the theatre was packed to its capacity. He enjoyed the trip of eleven days on the Pullman, reading, as he did, half-way across the continent, Dante with all the interest and freshness of a novel. One day he was driven by friends into the heart of the Rocky Mountains, forty miles from Denver, and there they had luncheon. On their way home they stopped to see Lookout Mountain, where

Buffalo Bill lies buried, and where are the relics connected with his wonderful career, including the scalp and the knife with which, in a hand-to-hand conflict, he had slain and scalped the Indian "Yellow Hand."

The night he left Denver, on his way home, he was the guest of one of the patriotic societies of that wonderful city, and spoke upon a question selected for him in the glorious hall of the Colorado House of Representatives, "The South's Contribution to the West." It was a beautiful address, made out of a full store of intimate knowledge of the subject. Stating that he had not selected the subject, but that it had been chosen for him, and that he must tell the truth, he related the material facts in the history of the country with which he was so familiar; how George Rogers Clark had fixed the northern boundary of the United States; how Jefferson had made the Louisiana Purchase; how Lewis and Clark had crossed the continent; how Andrew Jackson had closed the Seminole War; how Taylor and Scott had fought the Mexican War; how Cyrus McCormick had revolutionized agriculture; and how Lincoln and Farragut had been men from the South.

This address, which his audience thought

all too short, and which his host, a Connecticut gentleman, declared a strong argument, was interrupted by the time for the leaving of his train back home. The address, so interesting, had been made without a note, and as he left the hall a great number of people came up and were presented to him. As a lady was presented to the speaker his brother said: "Madam, are you, a woman named Houston, willing to speak to him, and he did not mention Sam Houston?" To which he happily replied: "Madam, I hadn't got to him, when I had to stop to take this train!"

Back to Washington he came, and was so fortunate as to have his daughter Florence come thither and, with her delightful family, spend the winter with him. His manner with children was ever winsome. "Mr. Page loves me," said Mr. Dooley's little boy. "He says he does," said the little fellow triumphantly. When a little grandson of five came to him and told him that he knew a whole lot of "*cuss words*," he was very much shocked, and inquired what they were. "The rats! the deuce! and the dammit!" replied the lovely boy. "If you ever say any one of them again, and I hear about it, I shall have to have you

dreadfully punished," answered the offended and amused grandfather, as he demanded that John's mouth be washed out with soap and water.

XXIII

HIS HAPPY LIFE

Few men ever had a fuller or happier life than Thomas Nelson Page. He had good health, and enjoyed the gifts which attend a clean, wholesome disposition. His father used to say that the happiest lot in life was that which involved well-requited labor, and throughout his distinguished son's later life the saying was exemplified, for there were few more industrious people. The last day of his life he began to write as soon as it was light enough for him to see, and he wrote until he had done a full morning's work.

The reward which came to him for his work was a handsome one, and from his readings, as already mentioned, the return was large. His "Red Rock" sold more than a hundred thousand copies, yielding from its sale and the magazine rights to its author as much as thirty thousand dollars, while his other writings all brought him in a handsome yearly revenue.

As one reviews the life of Thomas Nelson Page, certain salient features stand out in his almost threescore and ten years—his family history and traditions and early training, his energy, his fearlessness, his simplicity, his genuine Americanism, or, as described by the general of our army, "his upstanding Americanism," and his reverence. When his patriotic poem, "The Dragon of the Seas," was published at the time of the Spanish-American War, one of the American captains had it printed and presented to every man on his battleship.

A few years ago he incurred the odium of some well-known people by taking to task a minister who, in preaching at a fashionable watering-place, had declared that they were looked upon by all Americans as patterns and standards of what was best in life. With an earnestness begotten of what he deemed an absolutely false standard of ideals, he wrote to a great newspaper traversing the statement, and asserting that it was untrue and un-American; that so far from looking to that so-called "set" for their manners and their moral standards, the American people viewed them with disgust and contempt for their grossness and immoralities.

This offended some good people, who felt that the foolish statement of a preacher had been taken too seriously by the author. It is mentioned as an evidence of Page's sincerity and bed-rock Americanism. In "John Marvel, Assistant," some suppose that Marvel's superior in the church, the Reverend Ebenezer Capon, was drawn to portray the life of the fashionable clergyman of the un-American and, as he believed, the unholy type.

No citizen was ever prouder of his country, and this embraced the history of his State and county. He used to tell on his devoted friend the Honorable Eppa Hunton, Jr., a native of Fauquier County, the now well-known story of the men who met in the smoking-room of a great ocean steamer, and who, in their confidence over some "good Scotch," began to tell of their nationality. One said he was a subject of the White Tsar; another of his master, the Kaiser; and the third that he was a subject of His Majesty, "the beat of whose drum was heard 'round the world." The last man to speak said quietly, to the dismay of the others, that he came "from the upper edge of Fauquier"!

He always spoke of the county of his birth, as is the custom in Virginia, as "*my* county,"

and many a youngster who hailed from Hanover found a patient listener in the busy writer, who was rarely too busy to talk to one from "home." A great newspaper, in describing his work, said that "he was known as ambassador to Italy, but that he had been before that for years the ambassador from the South to the North."

Neither travel nor association with distinguished foreigners ever changed the tones of his voice or the pronunciation of the words he heard used by his father and mother. The broad vowel sounds, now almost lost in eastern Virginia, and a certain Scotch use which descended from his north of England ancestors, made what Hopkinson Smith wrote of "Colonel Cyarter" as burlesque, his devoted co-lecturer Page's usual pronunciation. But while calling his distinguished kinsman, Colonel Carter of the artillery, "Cyarter," there was absolutely no authority for calling that officer, as Smith did in his charming story, "*Cyurnel*"; but *can't* was ever "cyant," and *garden* was ever "gyarden," and *cart* was ever "cyart" when he was ambassador, as they were when as a child, digging in "the gyarden," with a gate so narrow that a "cyart cyan't get through."

He was rather impatient of affectation, being so free from all taint of it himself. Once at his table a charming visitor expressed some opinion as to certain uses, which she desired to have him bolster up, and, turning to him, said in quite a naïve way: "Don't you think so, Mr. Page?" To which, as all listened, he replied, gravely but politely: "If there's one thing I don't think, it's that!" He was very fond of quoting the proverb of Solomon which he had heard his father quote so often: "The prosperity of fools shall destroy them!"

After six years of service abroad as ambassador, where he had been known as "sua eccellenza," he came back to his home and friends unspoiled and unaffected. He walked and talked as of old with those whom he loved and who loved him. To his younger neighbors he was "*Mr. Tom.*" To the old ones he was "Tom." In his career I now recall but two disappointments. One was when, as a lawyer, he failed of appointment by the city council of Richmond to codify the laws of that city, and the other was when he failed to receive a doctorate from the University of Bologna. In each instance this is but the opinion of the writer of this memoir.

On a rainy night, after his return from Italy,

he attended a "school-league" meeting at a little country schoolhouse, two miles from "Oakland." He took a seat in one of the school chairs and watched with interest the proceedings, listening to the reading of the minutes, reports, etc. After a while he rose and, addressing the chairman, asked what was the method of becoming a member of the league. Thereupon one moved that Doctor Page be elected a member.

When the new member was asked to speak, he related an incident told him by Governor Herrick, of Ohio. When, as a young man, he had taught school, there had entered the door of the schoolhouse an old man who had been travelling along the road and who, as he entered, asked for a piece of chalk. Then he went to a blackboard and wrote in a legible hand the line, "What thy hand finds to do, do it with thy might." He asked that each child present would copy it, which was done, and the old man went on his way and was heard of no more.

In after-years, when the teacher was governor of his State, there entered the executive office one day a thrifty-looking middle-aged man, who introduced himself as one of the governor's former scholars. Then he took out

of his pocket a worn scrap of paper with the legend on it, written the day of the old traveller's visit, to which he said he had attributed much of his success and prosperity in life. Since the death of Page, the "Fairview School League" has had a large picture of him hung in the building, with the above legend written thereon.

Several years ago the author's wife endowed a visiting nurse's settlement a mile from "Oakland," and "Pinecote" has been indeed a benediction to the community. It was done as a memorial to his mother. It was done in her lifetime, that she might have the enjoyment of seeing the good work it was hoped it might accomplish. An additional bequest was made in his will to this object and to the school across the road, which has an interesting history. Nearly a hundred years ago a country farmer left his farm to certain gentlemen in the neighborhood, to establish a school for the benefit of the children of his poor neighbors. Among the trustees of that school have been the author's father and uncle and brother and the author himself. For years the school had the distinction of running all the year with holidays, two weeks at corn-planting time, two weeks at wheat harvest, two weeks at

tobacco-cutting time, and two weeks at Christmas. Page once said that the "Aaron Hall School" had given him much instruction, though he had never attended it, and that he regarded its founder as one of the remarkable men of his time. The Pages supplied a manual-training department, which at the time of the Jamestown Exposition supplied the only exhibit of school work from the county. The will of the author further endowed the school and also endowed a nurse's settlement in York, Maine, which had been begun by his wife, and a cot in the Sheltering Arms Hospital, Richmond, as a memorial to his first wife. Few men have ever been more reverent than the author of "The Land of the Spirit." The stories contained therein might have been written by Charles Kingsley, Dean Farrar, or Phillips Brooks. His reverence for law, for age, for womanhood, for genuine piety was a marked characteristic. His father used to describe one of his neighbors as a "law-abiding" citizen. This the son deemed the highest praise that could be bestowed.

He entered the little church of his childhood upon one of his last visits to "Oakland," to see some improvements he had helped to make, and as one entered who wondered at

his delay, he was found kneeling reverently at the communion rail. He knelt at the spot in front of his mother's seat, and on the ledge where, as a little boy, he had sat facing the congregation once, with his father's hat on the back of his head, much to the amusement of the boys and girls in front of him. "I hope, my son," his mother once said, with the solicitude begotten of her love for him, "you do not let your success spoil you." To which he replied reverently: "I have always tried to walk humbly with my God." In his beautiful copy of Souvestre's "Attic Philosopher in Paris," he has marked this paragraph:

> We know a man who, in the fever of restlessness and of ambition which racks society in our time, continues to fill his humble part in the world without a murmur, and who still preserves a taste for poverty, with no other fortune than a small clerkship, which enables him to live within the narrow limits separating competence from want. Our philosopher looks from the height of his attic upon society, as upon a sea whose riches he does not covet, and whose shipwrecks he does not fear. Too insignificant to excite envy, he sleeps peacefully, wrapped in his obscurity.

A lifelong friend said that he had heard Tom Page tell more good stories than any other living man, both in private and in public, but he had never heard him tell a vulgar

or profane one. His devotion to the church in which he was brought up is well known among all his friends, among whom were many bishops and other clergy. He was no bigot, however, nor did he ever assume the air of infallibility. While his convictions were strong, he was ever ready to yield due credit to the sincerity and opinions of others. Among his intimates were those of other churches and of no church. Blackwell and Hatcher and Broaddus and Curry and Mitchell were among those for whom he had respect and affection.

He used to tell the story on Doctor McCosh, of Princeton, when a student came, telling of having lost his faith and asking to be excused from further attendance at chapel. The old man got up and opened the door and said: "Get out of my house, ye young fool! Get out of my house, ye young fool!" And as the student reached the foot of the steps outside, called after him, using the familiar and hospitable expression: "Come and see me!"

On his last birthday (April 23) Page walked with his brother and nephew in the early morning, at Pinehurst, N. C. As they reached the church he said he would go in to

the service which was then being held, and they all took the communion together. His will, written a week afterward, contains in its first clause:

> I declare in the first place that I hold the Christian Faith as taught in Christ's words and life, and exemplified in the lives of those who have been nearest to me in life.

XXIV

HIS LITERARY WORK AND PLACE IN LITERATURE

Whatever Thomas Nelson Page wrote was done to the best of his ability. It was the result of laborious effort. He wrote and corrected and rewrote and corrected again. His method was to write upon a good-sized pad with pencil, and then, after correction, to submit it to the typewriter. His aim was to express himself in the simplest English. As already mentioned, he thought his children's stories had been of benefit in promoting a lucidity of style in his work. He held the view "that easy writing makes hard reading," and spared no pains to make his work complete. His classical knowledge and his familiarity with the best in literature, especially his acquaintance with Plutarch, gave him an idea of character-sketching which was of great service.

In "Robert E. Lee, Man and Soldier," he has reached the height of his style as a biographer. With the famous lines of Thucydides

on the title-page, directing the traveller who passed that way, "Go tell the Lacedemonians that we lie dead upon the battle-field, obedient to their laws," he portrays the life and character and campaigns of Lee in a way that delights all who would know of the purest life recorded of a soldier since the days of Epaminondas. The style is simple, and the campaigns, though described accurately as to numbers and location of troops, are reported in such an untechnical way as to give to the layman the best idea of the life and work of General Lee to be found in any volume of equal size. The plans of battles are made clear as one reads of them in Page's book.

The author's novels have been thought by some to be lacking in plot; but they are exactly according to his ideals. His idea was to weave about the time and place of which he wrote some love-story or romance which should accurately portray the life of the period. He was not attempting the "problem novels," which profess to cure the ills of life by parading them. He did not believe the province of a novelist to be that of a scavenger, nor that it was the author's duty to be dealing with the physical or moral filth of the sewer or back-stairs.

A lady once spoke of the "atmosphere" of a novel to him, and he replied: "'Tis the atmosphere of the 'cesspool.'" He did not think that the novel was intended to take the place of the pulpit, nor that all the ills of life should be publicly exposed nor the passions dissected and laid open to public gaze, any more than the human body to be dissected should be thus exposed. His idea of a novel was to portray the life of interesting people and scenes, rather than to show criminals and the crimes they committed. He believed that as public executions were brutalizing to spectators, so the writing of lustful, libidinous scenes by authors, who appealed to a certain following with perverted tastes, was brutalizing, and made the reader wonder, not about the character in the book, but about the character of the writer. He thought the place of a novel was with but not a substitute for the platform, that while the novel should hold the "mirror up to nature," it should be to those scenes which interest and delight. "My dear," once said his aunt, to whom he owed so much for his taste in literature, "it may require as much genius to paint a pigsty as it does a cathedral; but I prefer to look at the cathedral." He deemed Fielding and Thack-

eray and Dickens the best of English, and Hawthorne the best of American, novelists. "Henry Esmond" was the greatest novel, with "Bleak House" a close second. Of some critics of Dickens he said: "They abuse him and steal from him."

Scholarship was a practical thing with him. He loved to pick up from the table Horace or Virgil and read some familiar or new passage in his moments of rest. "What are you reading?" he would be asked. "An old friend of the family," he would answer. In a letter from Pinehurst, upon the occasion of the visit already referred to, he wrote April 12, 1922:

> I gave Robert a French lesson yesterday, and shall give him a lesson in Horace this afternoon, as I brought my Horace with me.

In his Horace, among the striking passages marked, was one indexed by him in the back: "pursuit of Riches destructive." The reference is to the passage in the first epistle of the First Book:

> "*Fervet avaritia miseroque cupidine pectus.*"

In the eighteen volumes of the Popular Edition of Page's works may be found his literary work. Some idea of how much he has written

may be gathered by comparison with the other well-known names published in the same edition. Barrie has twelve volumes, Kipling twenty-four, Poe ten, Stevenson twenty-five, Thackeray thirty-seven, Van Dyke seventeen.

Of Sir Walter Scott it was said: "Dying, he left no line he wished to blot." Of Thomas Nelson Page it may be said that no line he ever wrote had to be expurgated to be read in the most refined company. No censor has to weigh what he wrote, with reference to its grossness or refined sensuality. If he describes vice, he does it in such a way that it is known to be vice, not in a way that makes the reader begin to wonder if vice is not virtue when clad in the habiliments of beauty and art, and in an atmosphere of pleasure and luxury. His aim was to paint a true picture of what he described and accurately preserve the record of a past life which he so greatly admired. He once said that the thing which had impressed him more than anything, as he looked back over his life, was the way in which his people, in spite of poverty, and in the absence of even the necessities of life, had maintained themselves, and had never for an instant descended from the ideals which they had in the days of their prosperity. Their

clothes might be rusty, but their manners were bright; all means to furnish anything but the necessities might be wanting, but those necessities were divisible with others in more dire need. If there was plain living, there was also high thinking. None ever questioned their position nor their right to it, based, as it was, upon their virtues and their character.

With such a background, it was easy for the writer to tell the history of their life. How well he has done it, the readers of his books can testify. He has not done it by way of caricature, as Thackeray would have painted it, or even as Dickens might have described it, but rather as Goldsmith might have done, describing them as they were. Nor has he hesitated to picture their failings and shortcomings. If anything that they said or did was ridiculous, it was so told as to leave no sting behind it. It was rather the result of a fact stated than of a play upon bitter words. When "the colonel" in "Polly" learned of the girl's running away with Bob, there followed the contrast with the violent exhibition of temper and indignation, which only a masterhand could describe, of "his ordering waffles and hoe-cakes for breakfast, and calling for the books to have prayers."

If they who read the story of "Polly" should think "the colonel" somewhat after Addison's "Sir Roger," whom the author so much admired, it is possible to assure them that in Page's own family there was one who was the prototype of "the colonel"; and if the artist's fancy has touched up nature's product, it is fair to family history to report that many charming stories are still extant about an old bachelor uncle of the author who died during the war, and whose open-handed hospitality is still remembered by a few who were boys at that time. At his hospitable home, not far from "Oakland," were the best strain of game-chickens, and there were the best hunting-dogs to be found anywhere; but such was the affection of "the colonel" for his nephew, that when one of his fine pointers bit him, when he had come on an invitation to dine with the boys of the neighborhood, "the colonel" gave the dog away, saying he wouldn't keep a dog that bit a child. It was at this dinner that one of the boys after fifty years recalled the host's most catholic grace: "Christ died to save sinners; may he save the whole world! Amen!"

"Red Rock" is perhaps the best of his long novels, and it is a matter of regret that the

novel of the same period on which he was working, and for which he had gathered material, was not completed at the time of his death. "Dr. Cary," "Miss Thomasia," and "My Cousin Fanny" are perhaps his best-known characters, outside of his dialect stories, and are worthy of the pen of any master. "Dr. Cary" should rank with any medical hero from Hippocrates to Walter Reed, and "Miss Thomasia" and "My Cousin Fanny" should rank with the ladies in "Cranford." Old maids in fiction have generally been pictured as sour and disagreeable, as scheming and dissatisfied. In Page's characters there is a sweetness and intelligence worthy of those whom he practically drew from life as they were known to him. In "John Marvel, Assistant," already referred to, there are excellent characters drawn to show the genuine, compared with the artificial, service of God. The young Jew, perhaps, is the hero of the story. It is interesting to recall the fact that when the book appeared a member of a distinguished body of Jews, which met in Washington, presented those in attendance with a copy of the book, containing the author's autograph, which had been so signed at the donor's request. A young Hebrew friend of his in Rich-

mond gave to the author many of the ideas with which he has endowed "Wolfert."

Of Thomas Nelson Page's verse, it can be said that it has the genuine ring of sincerity, with much strength and beauty. The dialect verse is striking, the subjects chosen being natural and interesting. These verses, of which his "Uncle Gabe's White Folks" is the best-known poem, were first published in a volume with Armistead C. Gordon called "Befo' de War."

Then appeared his volume of verse "The Coast of Bohemia," in which are numerous charming lines and much patriotic sentiment. The author used to quote what Oliver Wendell Holmes said to him when he first met him: "Since Walt Whitman's time every jackass thinks he can write poetry." It is due to both gentlemen to say this was before Page's last-named volume appeared.

Ex-Governor Henry Stuart tells of being with Page when a great millionaire of the West, after telling of his family, denounced one of his sons as a fool. "Why," he added confidentially, "the fellow has actually written a book!"

XXV

THE IDEAL END

Thomas Nelson Page had an ideal life, and there was nothing more ideal than its end. He had come from a charming visit in Maryland to those whom he loved and by whom he was beloved, by way of Washington, where were his host of friends, among whom were the Russell Trains, who had been in Rome for years with him, and the Rozier Dulanys, for whom he felt a deep affection. He had rented his house in Washington and arrived at "Oakland" in the evening, after a long ride, somewhat fatigued. But what mattered that? He was at home. It was of this house, while the old one was burning, that he had telegraphed his father and mother: "Keep a brave heart; we will rebuild at once." Next day he seemed bright, and worked with his usual zeal. Then he drove about the neighborhood to see friends, and came to Richmond to see the town house, in which the winter was to be spent with his brother's family.

While there he took part in the arrangement of pictures and furniture, and was deeply interested in the new winter quarters, which were soon to be occupied by the "Oakland" family. Late in the evening they returned to the country, and next morning, as his brother took leave of him, he said he must go back to Washington that day, as he had promised to help further in the senatorial campaign in Maryland already mentioned. At their parting there was exchanged the hearty "God bless you!" with which they usually parted. At 1.30 P. M. came the news that he had taken the journey which he had not expected to take that day, but for which he was prepared and had been prepared to take whenever the call came.

"If you take care of yourself and are prudent you will live many years," an eminent physician had told him, after "looking him over" thoroughly when, at the instance of friends, he had gone to him. "Well, doctor," he replied, "I shall not spend the rest of my life running from death. I hope I shall meet him like a man when he comes." The night he lay in the "Oakland" end-parlor, with the door closed, after the manner of the house, with none "sitting up," one wrote in the back

of the proof copy of his "Dante," which had just been published, the following statement, which was duly read to the five hundred people who gathered at the Fork Church at the service held there before his remains were taken to Washington for the service and burial in that place:

At 1:00 P. M., November 1st, 1922, (All Saints' Day) a bright, sunshiny day in the presence of his friends and loved ones, died the author of this book. After he had just set out a young shrub, and driven down the stakes with his own hands, he handed the spade to Alfred and said, "Here Alfred, take this spade." He then sat down and Alfred took him in his arms. He smiled sweetly at his sister who spoke to cheer him, and closed his eyes. The soul had returned to God who gave it—the God in whom he so confidently trusted and whom he loyally served.

How ideal! At the home of his birth, and of his mother's birth a century before; within twenty steps of the spot on which he was born, after a life which took him abroad to dwell amid turbulence and war; at the home he loved, and where he so much enjoyed himself; occupied in improving the grounds; full of enthusiasm; amid the gorgeous coloring of the autumn foliage, he rested as a tired child, and slept to awake in his Father's house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.

He had written of such an event in "Ole 'Stracted":

And with a smile on his face he sank back into his son's arms. The evening sun dropping on the instant of his setting, flooded the room with light; but as Ephraim gently eased him down and drew his arm from around him it was the light of the unending morning that was on his face.

On the fly-leaf of his Prayer Book, on the table in his room, the morning of his death, was written and signed by him the following verse:

Teach me thy way, O Lord, and I will walk in thy truth; O knit my heart unto Thee that I may fear thy Name. Psalm 86: 11. Thos. Nelson Page.

The governor of Virginia had the flag on the Capitol lowered to half-mast. The college and schools of his native county adjourned, and all within reach attended as escort when his remains were put on the train; the merchants suspended business, and telegrams came from across the world. The King of Italy and the Premier of Italy and an ex-President of the United States sent their sympathy, as did the general of our army and the admiral in command of our navy. The University of Virginia has issued the "Thomas Nelson Page Number" of its magazine, with

articles by its most distinguished professors and former rector. An ex-secretary of the navy devoted a page of his great newspaper to an editorial giving an estimate of his life and work. The University of Richmond has established "The Thomas Nelson Page Literary Society," and hundreds of notices have appeared in the press of the world. A former premier of Montenegro, in describing how Page's individual efforts had saved his family from the violence of the Jugo-Slavs, wrote:

A la très estimée Famille de M. Thomas Nelson Page, ex-Ambassadeur des Etats Unis d'Amérique à Rome. . . . Il a sauvé ma famille de la ruine et de la mort. Il est notre sauveur, et nous lui devons un reconnaissance éternelle. Gloire éternelle à sa mémoire en ce monde, et la paix de paradis à son âme immortelle dans l'autre.

Professor Charles Alphonso Smith says his stories have done more to preserve the spirit of the old South than all the histories yet written. Another scholar said he was the greatest literary man the South has had since Poe. A colored neighbor said: "He was our friend." A schoolmistress in Georgia wrote: "He was one of our greatest, if not our greatest man." In the commonplace book found

in his pocket the day of his death were these lines, copied in his own hand:

From an old bench in a garden in South Cornwall, belonging to the Thynnes:

"The kiss of the sun for pardon,
The song of the birds for mirth,
One's nearer God's heart in a garden
Than anywhere else on earth."

WITHDRAWN